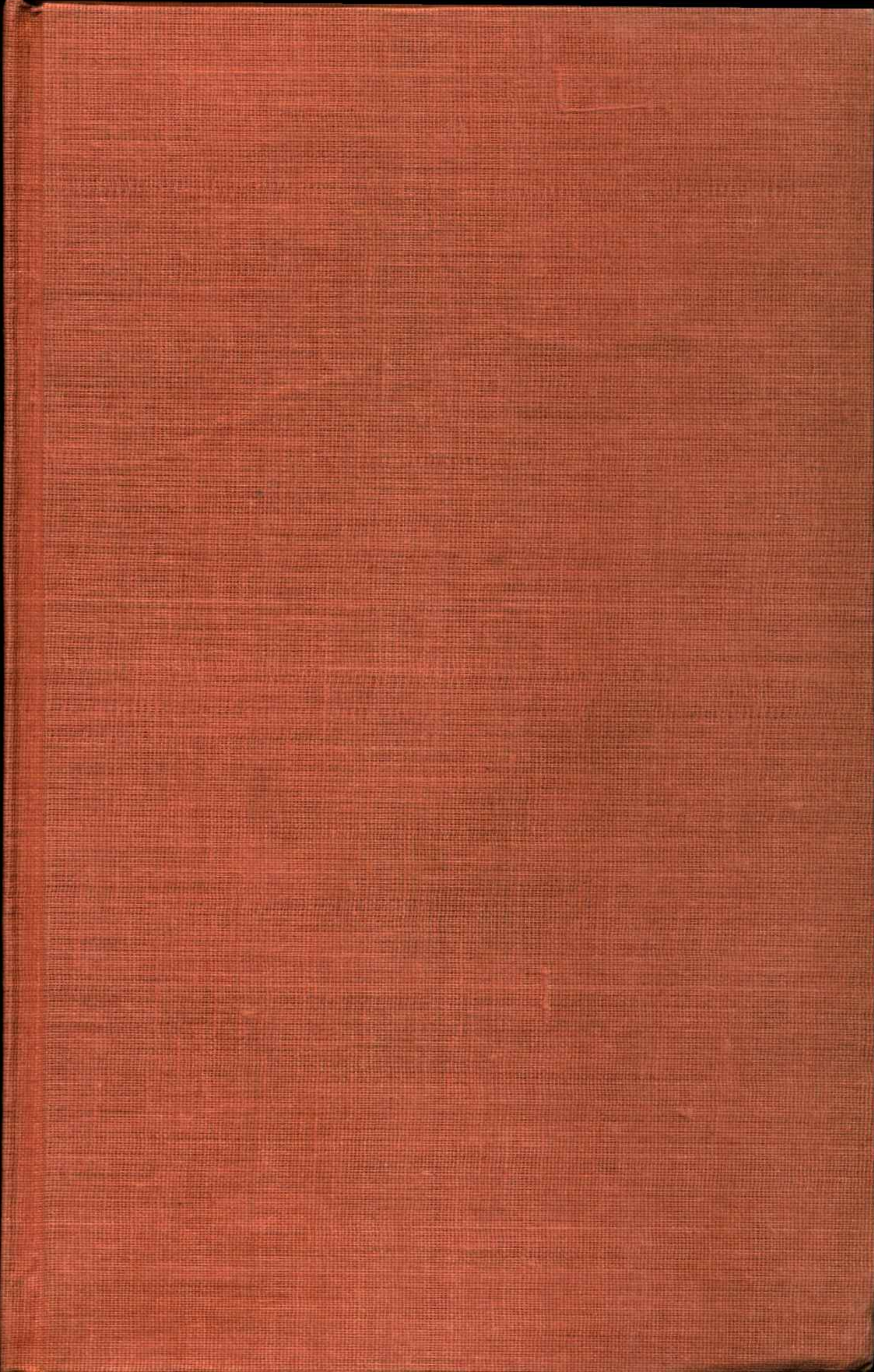
Mystical Verses of Lallā

A Journey of Self Realization



Translated with an Introduction
by
JAISHREE KAK

Illustrations by Joseph Singer



Mystical Verses of Lallā

Mystical Verses of Lallā

A Journey of Self Realization

Translated with an Introduction by
Jaishree Kak

Illustrations by
Joseph Singer

MOTILAL BANARSIDASS PUBLISHERS
PRIVATE LIMITED • DELHI

First Edition : Delhi, 2007

ISBN: 978-81-208-3255-8

MOTILAL BANARSIDASS
41 U.A. Bungalow Road, Jawahar Nagar, Delhi 110 007
8 Mahalaxmi Chamber, 22 Bhulabhai Desai Road, Mumbai 400 026
203 Royapettah High Road, Mylapore, Chennai 600 004
236, 9th Main III Block, Jayanagar, Bangalore 560 011
Sanas Plaza, 1302 Baji Rao Road, Pune 411 002
8 Camac Street, Kolkata 700 017
Ashok Rajpath, Patna 800 004
Chowk, Varanasi 221 001

PRINTED IN INDIA
BY JAINENDRA PRAKASH JAIN AT SHRI JAINENDRA PRESS,
A-45 NARAINA, PHASE-I, NEW DELHI 110 028
AND PUBLISHED BY NARENDRA PRAKASH JAIN FOR
MOTILAL BANARSIDASS PUBLISHERS PRIVATE LIMITED,
BUNGALOW ROAD, DELHI 110 007

for vajrapani

Table of Contents

Preface

Growing up in Kashmīr, I have memories of spectacular Himalayan mountains, magnificent lakes, and countless rivers snaking through the valley, and accompanying all is the echoing on festive occasions of the melodious singing of Lallā's verse-sayings, popularly known as *Lalla-Vākh*. Her outpourings are timeless and people of all faiths have treasured them. The oral transmission for centuries illustrates the extent to which she has been a part of folk memory. My old aunts who grew up in Kashmīr have memories of women reciting Lallā's verses while they spun fine shawls at the spinning wheel. Over the centuries, Lallā became the wise woman of Kashmīrī culture. She was invoked not only at moments of personal dilemma but also to celebrate moments of social togetherness. I myself remember my mother singing Lallā's verses and occasionally quoting them in her conversations.

Lallā's verses provide a revealing glimpse into her life, serving as a vehicle for the reader to participate in her most profound spiritual and emotional experiences. Her entire oeuvre presents different stages of her journey to achieve mystic communion with her higher Self or Śiva. Some of her verses deal with the early stages of her quest as she prepares her mind and body for a long and arduous journey through the inner landscape of mind. Others describe the advanced stages of her practice with sustained introspective contemplation, and yet others are uttered in the form of teachings to her community. Lallā's most profound verses are unmediated visions as she pours out her experiences into words.

Each verse, consisting of four lines, usually stands as an independent unit, though some are written as questions and answers. In translating verses, I have followed the originals as closely as possible in order to retain the spirit of Lallā's verses. I have tried to reproduce into translated language the inner form and rhythm of the originals in Kashmīrī, as I see them, by playing with punctuations, phrase breaks and line breaks. Accordingly, even though each original verse is four lines long, some of the translated verses are longer. The original Kashmīrī verse in Devanāgarī script accompanies each translated verse.

The present collection is a revised translation of the verses published in *To the Other Shore*, a critical study of Lallā's life and verses. This volume has been specifically prepared for different types of readers, especially the non-specialist. The readers interested only in Lallā's poetic outpourings have the English translations. Those proficient in the Kashmīrī language can read the English translations with the orginals in Kashmīrī. A key to pronunciation of Kashmīrī written in Devanāgarī script is provided for such readers. The collection also comes with a concordance of verses in various Lallā collections toward the end of the volume. For readers who wish to explore the Kashmīrī Śaiva philosophy that permeates Lallā's verses, a basic introduction to this thought system and its relevance to Lallā's verses is given in the appendix.

The preparation of this collection of verses has been a long journey, which started decades ago in Kashmīr when I had the good fortune of meeting the late Kashmīrī Śaiva scholar and teacher Swami Lakshman Jee. He ignited the spark. Many years later, the spark blossomed into a deep desire to work on Lallā's verses, which became an anchor around which my study of the Kashmīrī Śaiva tradition took shape. In this endevour, I acknowledge the support of my family and friends, both old and new. I owe a special gratitude to my late father Ram Nath Kak who went over my translation of the verses and shared with me his unique knowledge of

the Śaiva tradition. This project would have been inconceivable without my mother Sarojini Kak who told me fascinating stories and legends about Lallā as I was growing up in Kashmīr.

I especially feel honored by the contribution of Joseph Singer, an artist, photographer and printmaker. Singer brings to life essential themes of Lallā's life and poetry as he pours her vision into illustrations. His prints and drawings complement the verses, even entering into a conversation with them, thus providing visual pathways into the verses. Singer weaves a bridge between western and eastern sensibilities by translating the verses into a contemporary visual medium. Finally, I acknowledge the continuous support of my dear friend and colleague Kathy Phillips as she went over each verse with me to see if the original Kashmīrī verse was translated in the best possible way within the constraints imposed by another language and another culture. She has my warm thanks.



Introduction

The fourteenth-century mystic poet Lallā, also known as Lalleśvarī and Lal Dĕd, is an integral part of Kashmīrī language, literature, and culture. *Lalla-Vākh*[1] or Lallā's verse-sayings have resonated orally for centuries in the valley of Kashmīr. Lallā has been compared to Shakespeare, Hafiz, Kabir and Tulsidasa. And, she has been honored as the first Kashmīrī poet who modernized Kashmīrī language as well as literature. Her richness of language, turn of phrases, and metaphors are now standard expressions in modern Kashmīrī.

Lalla-Vākh: The Text

Lallā's compositions come to us in a form that is fairly modern, except for occasional archaic expressions with obscure or unknown meaning. As is common with the prolonged transmission of any oral tradition, it is hard to imagine that her verses have come to us in this century without any change. However, the interpolations and changes were probably minimal because of a very strong oral tradition in medieval Kashmīr where some families specialized in rote memorization of texts passed on from teacher to disciple, or within the family from one generation to another. One such oral recension by an old Brāhmin Dharmadāsa Darwēsh of the village Gush in Kashmīr, was used as the basis of the first scholarly collection of Lallā's verses in the West, which was put together in 1920 by Sir

[1] The Kashmīrī word "vākh" is the same as the Sanskrit word "vākya." In Kashmīrī "vākh" is used both as singular as well as plural. The literal meaning of the term *Lalla-Vākh* is Lallā's Verse-Sayings.

George Grierson and Lionell D. Barnett. Dharmadāsa Darwēsh recited Lallā's verses as he had learned them from his elders as part of the family tradition. In addition to this collection, Grierson consulted two other manuscripts of the Stein collection at the Oxford Indian Institute, Stein A and Stein B, both written in Śāradā alphabet of Kashmīrī. Since it has not been possible to date the manuscripts that Grierson and Barnett used, it has yet to be determined how long the transmission of Lallā's poetry was exclusively oral.

Aside from Grierson and Barnett's 109-verse collection published as *Lallā Vākyāni*, Pandit Anand Koul collected seventy-five verses, which were published in the *Indian Antiquary* in the 1930s. Quite a few in Anand Koul's collection appear to be either variants or later additions. Some other noteworthy collections are S. N. Charagi's *The Wise Sayings of Laleshwari* (1938) and the special *Koshur Samāchār* (1971) edition on Lallā. The latter is a compilation from several different sources, but here, too, a great number of verses can easily be rejected since they do not conform to the style or thought content that has come to be associated with Lallā. Other more recent collections are primarily based on the above works.

Jayalal Kaul's study of Persian sources sheds further light on the confusion related to some verses, since they seem to have been mixed up with those of the Sūfī mystic Sheikh Nūr-ud-dīn (also known as Nund Ṛṣi), a junior contemporary of Lallā, who greatly revered her. Kaul notes that thirty-five verses in various Lallā collections are also part of *Nūrnāma-s* and *Ṛṣīnāma-s*, the biographies of Sheikh Nūr-ud-dīn. Many of these verses in later copies of the *Ṛṣīnāma-s* have been wrongly attributed to Sheikh Nūr-ud-dīn, even though this mixing-up of verses is not present in the earlier copies (Kaul 32-33). Since no concrete evidence is available to show whether the Lallā manuscripts or copies of manuscripts, the basis of the Grierson collection, were written before or after the earliest *Nūrnāma* recorded two hundred years after Sheikh Nūr-ud-dīn's death, it is difficult

to determine the true originator of the handful of verses that have been attributed both to Nūr-ud-dīn and Lallā. Ultimately, it is the style of the verses that determines their validity as hers.

The fact that Lallā's old Kashmīrī verses have come to us in a modern form intelligible to any average Kashmīrī is evidence in itself of continuing oral transmission over a fairly long period of time. It has been speculated that her verses over the centuries began to be sung by village minstrels. Later, they became part of Kashmīrī classical music (*sūfiānā kalām*) as they were sung as sacred invocations to open the assembly of Sūfīs (*Majlis-e-m'ārifīn*). Even though the language of the verses changed slowly along with the Kashmīrī language, the thought content, images, and metaphors seem to have remained the same, which gives the body of Lallā's compositions inner coherence. Her unique use of vivid concrete images and metaphors can be used as a helpful criterion for judging whether a particular verse can be attributed to her.

Life and Legends

Fourteenth century Kashmīr was a region in turmoil. The golden age of Kashmīr with its great and original contributions to literature, philosophy, drama, sculpture, painting, and architecture had passed, as the state collapsed from outside invasions and political upheavals from within. With the old order in disarray, the majority of people were concerned mainly with survival.

Queen Kotā, the last Hindu ruler of Kashmīr, actively participated in running the administration in the first few decades of the century in various capacities, including briefly as sovereign herself. Shah Mīr, a Muslim minister in the court, planned a rebellion in which she died. Kotā's death marks the end of old Kashmīr. Shah Mīr ascended the throne as Sultan Shams-ud-dīn in 1339 and started the Sultan dynasty, which ruled Kashmīr for over two centuries. The Hindu rule had been marked by religious tolerance, which continued under the early Muslim Sultans.

Lallā was born into a Brahmin family either in Pāndrenṭhan or Sempor in Kashmīr sometime in the early 1300s, and she died in the 1370s. A great deal of controversy exists as to when exactly she was born. Pandit Anand Koul gives the date of her birth, without citing his sources, as the middle of the fourteenth century (Koul 1921, 302). Jayalal Kaul's study of Persian sources shows, however, that Lallā in fact was born somewhere between 1317 and 1320, even as early as 1300-1301. This would explain the time frame in the first reference to Lallā in a Persian chronicle, *Wāqi'āti Kashmīr* (1746) that describes her as having flourished or become famous during the reign of Sultan Alāu-ud-dīn (1343-54) and having died during the reign of Sultan Shihāb-ud-dīn (1354-73) (Kaul pp. 5-7).

She was given in marriage to Nica Bhaṭṭa of Pāmpor at a young age where she received a new name Padmāvatī. In her verses, Lallā always refers to herself by her maiden name "Lallā" and it is this name that one can with certainty say belonged to her. In folk memory she appears with two other names—Lalleśvarī and Lal Dĕd. In Persian chronicles she is called Lallā 'Ārifa.

Legends about Lallā abound. We encounter several images: a gentle, introspective woman; a wandering ascetic who defies all conventions as she forges her own path; and a spiritual teacher who offers words of wisdom with love to her people (and to us today). Her married life was unhappy due to her mother-in-law's harsh treatment and her husband's angry disposition toward her. Lallā was not given enough to eat. Her mother-in-law would serve her a stone, covered with a thin layer of rice so as to make the serving seem large. She would quietly eat whatever she was served without any protest. In one legend, to prepare for a special *grahaśānti* ceremony at her home, she goes out to fetch water from the river. One of her neighbors teases her, saying she would have a great feast that night. Lallā's reply—whether a lamb or a sheep is killed at her house, the daughter-in-law will always get a stone—has become a famous saying in Kashmīrī.

All legends agree that she was introspective and did not show a great deal of interest in worldly affairs. She is drawn early to spiritual quest. Siddha Śrīkaṇṭha initiates her into the Śaiva yoga. According to a legend, Lallā walks to the nearby river in Zinypor village before dawn every day to fetch a pitcher of water as was the custom in those days. But instead of directly filling the pitcher and returning home, she crosses the river to visit the shrine of Naṭa Keśava Bhairava. Suspecting her of infidelity, her husband quietly follows her one day on her morning ritual. He finds her sitting alone by the riverbank meditating. Enraged at what he sees, he goes home. As she returns with the water pitcher on her head, he confronts her angrily about her diversion and smashes the pitcher with a stick. Even though the pitcher breaks, the legend says, the water stays miraculously intact on her head. Lallā calmly goes inside the house, and pours the water into smaller vessels until all are full. She takes the leftover water and throws it outside where a pond is formed. Later on, the pond is named "Lalla- trāg" (the Pond of Lallā) which is said to have been full of water for many centuries. The incident marks the time of her renunciation when she leaves her home and family and becomes a wandering ascetic.

Lallā's verses reveal her to be a woman with feelings, thoughts and desires. She suffers trials and tribulations that a woman in medieval society might face because she is daring to seek her own path. Some of her verses reflect her awareness of the social construction of gender, perhaps not in the same way as a contemporary woman might, but nonetheless it is an amazing insight for a woman from the medieval period. In one verse she says she came to the world like a blooming cotton flower with all potential and possibilities intact, full of enthusiasm and aspiration. However, the ginner and the carder of society reduced her to a miserable state and turned her into utility-directed fine yarn, to be hung on the weaver's loom and turned into cloth. Her social self is thus a creation of others to be put in service for others.



I, Lallā, set out hoping to bloom
like a cotton flower.
The ginner and the carder gave me hard blows.
After the spinner spun me into fine yarn,
I was stretched on the loom
in the weaver's shop. (V 13)

When the washerman dashed me on a slab of stone,
rubbing me with much soap and washing soda
and the tailor cut me into bits with scissors,
I, Lallā, attained supreme bliss. (V 14)

Lallā feels the need to transcend the conditioning which confines her to socially prescribed gender roles. She compares setting herself free from this conditioning to cleaning a piece of cloth by rubbing it with soap and dashing it on a slab of stone to loosen the extraneous matter sticking to it. She describes the shredding of the old identity in terms of the washed cloth being cut into little bits by the tailor's scissors. The "washerman" in the above verse is the self within her that aspires to higher states of awareness and hence, engages in acts that enable Lallā to transcend the socially defined "feminine" self, which she experiences as oppressive. As the tailor cuts the washed piece of cloth into bits, Lallā the daughter, Lallā the daughter-in-law, and Lallā the wife are torn into shreds and her true identity emerges into the open. The "tailor" is her higher Self, which guides her to forge a new identity that is not confined to socially prescribed modes of behavior.

Lallā's refusal to perform the female gender role is illustrated by the legends that describe her roaming in a nude state after she renounces her family. Such legends are based on the following verse:

My guru gave me only one advice—
from outside transfer the attention within.
That became Lallā's initiation—
that is why I began to wander naked. (V 50)

Lallā's wandering naked could refer to her divesting or disrobing herself of all worldly attachments, including her family, friends, and the comfort of a home. This interpretation is in line with the content of her other verses, which use a great many analogies and metaphors to convey esoteric ideas and experiences.

If we compare Lallā to another medieval Indian mystic poet/singer Mīrābāi (b. 1498), it is obvious that Lallā is more radical and challenges the patriarchal social norms at a deeper level. She rejects traditionally defined attributes of feminine self-effacement, often accompanied by devotional and supplicant approach toward spiritual experience. She takes control of her experience as a self-contained subjectivity, identifying more with Śiva than with Śakti.[2] This approach is associated with extreme austerities, self-containment, and self-absorption. No wonder her chosen deity is Śiva, the ascetic god of the Śaiva tradition.

Lallā is aware of her isolation not only in the secular world which she has renounced, but also in the spiritual world where, as an outsider to the written Kashmīrī Śaiva tradition, she has no way to share her experiences with those who understand her. She also does not have recourse to the experiences of women, oral or written, that preceded her. In contrast to Lallā, the seventeenth century Kashmīrī mystic poet Rūpa Bhavānī specifically mentions the sustenance she derives from Lallā's life and her verses. Even though Rūpa finds Lallā's life continuing into her own, she does not feel the need to become a wandering ascetic. In spite of leaving home for brief periods of time, Rūpa nonetheless remains integrally connected to her family and community.

As Lallā begins her quest, she describes worldly life in terms of a river, which she needs to cross in order to reach the other shore. Her body is a "boat" adrift in the material world that is

[2] Śiva represents the male principle and Śakti the female principle. Śakti is active and in this creative role, she is identified with nature, whereas Śiva is identified with pure spirit.

a temporary residence now. She has yet to prepare herself physically and mentally for the journey. In order to steer the "body-boat" to reach the other shore where her real home lies, she must train her mind in sustained and focused attention:

My path to this world was direct,
the road back is not.
The day passed by the riverside—
not a penny is in my pocket.
What would I pay to be ferried across? (V 1)

Lallā compares her weak will at this early stage of her quest to an "untwisted rope" which is not strong enough to pull the "boat" she is riding. It is like a "grass arrow fitted on a wooden bow." Her novice self is like "a shop without a lock in the midst of the marketplace" and as such an easy target for worldly desires that can rob her of her aspiration to move forward on her path:

A grass arrow fitted on a wooden bow I am.
My palace is in the hands of an ignorant carpenter.
In the midst of the market place I am
like a shop without a lock.
My body has become bereft of sanctity.
Who would understand my plight? (V 7)

In this unexplored territory, Lallā's journey is perilous. She is overwhelmed as she finds herself alone without any family or community support. She describes her body as a "cauldron" full of sensory impressions that tie her to the world. In yet another verse, she compares her body to a house and her sense organs to its doors and windows that must be kept shut in order for her to stay focused on her practice. Her scattered attention is like the "water oozing from unbaked clay saucers" and her restless mind is like a horse galloping away from one thought to another. The "mind-horse" needs to be brought under control in order to experience her higher Self.

The mind-horse wanders all over
with the flicker of an eyelid,

traveling a hundred thousand leagues.
Whoever holds the reins
with self-restraint and discrimination
succeeds in controlling
the inhaled and the exhaled breath. (V 59)

In a world bustling with activity all around her, Lallā strives to be detached. However, detachment is difficult to achieve. She uses the image of sugar candy to personify all enjoyable desires that pull her toward the world of sensory pleasures.

Loosened is the shoulder knot
of my bundle of candy.
Bent like a bow is my body.
How can I carry this burden?
My guru's words
to achieve detachment are painful.
A flock without a shepherd I am—
how can I carry this burden? (V 6)

As she continues on her path, she exercises rigorous self-discipline. The following verse poignantly reflects her effort to tear herself away from the comforts and pleasures of life by reminding herself of their transitory nature:

I gently lament for you.
Mind, you are in love with illusion.
Not a shadow of this worldly splendor
will accompany you.
Oh, why do you forget your real nature? (V 5)

The path that she has chosen for herself is not easy to follow. She has yet to reach the level of detachment that would help her overcome the desire to live a worldly life.

Lallā's intuition is forged in the furnace of suffering. She endures ill treatment at home. But her walking out also gives her strength. Estrangement from society becomes her shield in the early stages of her quest. Her refusal to conform to social conventions is not taken kindly by community members who gossip about her and find her lifestyle scandalous.

As a wandering ascetic, insults and abuses come her way. She sometimes succeeds in keeping her spirits high, while at other times she is filled with self-pity. In order to make progress in her practice and reach her desired goal, Lallā feels the need to leave all negative emotions behind. Thus, she says:

The chain of embarrassment will break
when I can tolerate taunts
and mocking words.
The robe of self-pity will burn away
when the inner unbridled horse is under control. (V 8)

A story about her relates how street urchins used to hurl insults at her. A kind-hearted shopkeeper, a cloth merchant, witnessing this scene, scolds the youngsters and sends them away. Lallā calmly asks the shopkeeper to give her a long piece of cloth. When he complies, she tells him to cut it into two equal parts and weigh them separately. She then drapes one piece on her left shoulder and the second on her right shoulder and goes away. As soon as someone calls her a bad name, she ties a knot in the piece on her right shoulder and as she is shown respect by somebody else, she ties a knot in the other piece on her left shoulder. In the evening she brings back the two pieces of cloth to the shopkeeper and asks him to weigh them once again—both pieces weigh exactly as they had before. The number of knots signifying good or bad words has had no effect on the weight of each half of the piece of cloth. She thus conveys to the shopkeeper her equanimity in the face of respect or ridicule shown by others towards her:

Even if thousands of abuses
are hurled at me,
I am not hurt in my heart.
If I am a devotee
of all-pervading Self—Śaṅkara,
ashes will not soil the mirror. (V 11)

Lallā's verses usually lack the devotional fervor of Bhakti poets like Mīrābai. Hence, it is easy to overlook the significance of "love" in her oeuvre. A few of her verses, however, do refer to the world of emotions. Intense yearning and love, she realizes, is the first step to get closer to the object of her quest. As a devotee of Śiva, she "suffers the fire of love" as she awakens Śiva within her. She conveys the experience of "awakening her darling" by using vivid images of "grinding" the heart in the "mortar of love," and "burning" and "roasting" it and "tasting" it herself.

I ground my heart in the mortar of love.
Evil thoughts left me
and I became calm.
I burned and roasted it
and tasted it myself.
How do I know
if this practice will let me live or die? (V 18)

The love experienced with so much intensity is not the egoistical or narcissistic love, but rather love for the boundless reality within her. This is a love in which fulfillment is not a let-down, a love that remains forever fresh. The inner-directed love for Śiva thus constitutes the first step in the unfolding of her spiritual journey.

Awakening in the early dawn,
I summoned the restless mind.
Enduring the pain,
I devoted myself to god.
Saying "I am Lallā, I am Lallā,"
I awakened my darling.
On becoming one with him,
I purified my mind and body. (V 19)

In the fire of this love, Lallā forges her mind and body. She has momentary glimpses of the bliss of communion with Śiva which prepare her for more advanced stages of her practice.

Lallā's life can be compared to that of the medieval Śaiva mystic poet Akkā Mahādevī who lived in South India in the 12th century. Mahādevī belonged to the Vīraśaiva religious reform movement of mystics who rejected caste and class hierarchy and protested against ritualistic and orthodox Śaiva religion focused around complex daily rituals. She is known to have defied social rules and customs, thrown away modesty and wandered in a nude state, her body covered with her long hair. Mahādevī's poetry (*vācanas*), spoken in Kannada, shows a curious blend of bhakti tradition and Śaiva monotheism. In these, she expresses her love and devotion to Cenna Mallikārjuna, a form of Śiva. Describing him as her husband, lover, and father, her only aspiration is to be united with him.

Mahādevī uses the genre of love poetry to articulate her spiritual experience. When she visits the school of Vīraśaiva mystics, founded by Basavanna in Kalyaṇa, she engages in a verbal exchange with the head of the assembly, Allama Prabhu, who tests her to see if she is worthy to join the fellowship. The first question he asks her is to identify her husband if she wants to stay. Mahādevī replies that she is married to Cenna Mallikārjuna. The verbal exchange that ensues soon after shows the assembly her advanced spiritual state and she is welcomed with open arms. In some of her poems, she describes her initiation into the fellowship in terms of a marriage ritual when she becomes Cenna Mallikārjuna's wife:

> Setting a canopy of fire
> Over an altar made of water,
> Spreading a hailstone carpet,
> He came and wedded
> A headless bridegroom to a legless bride.
> They gave me to a life never to be shaken off!
> They married me to a groom
> Named Cenna Mallikārjuna[3]

---

[3] Akka Mahādevī, quoted in Swamy's *The Vīraśaiva Saints*, p. 104.

Mahādevī's poetry is similar to Mīrā in its bhakti orientation, even as it is closer to Lallā's in its philosophic and esoteric content. Unlike Lallā, however, Mahādevī makes an aesthetic dimension central to her spiritual quest. In all her poems the signature line refers to Cenna Mallikārjuna, (translated both as "lovely Arjuna, Lord of goddess Mallika" or "lovely lord, white as jasmine"). The latter suggests both the aroma as well as the beauty of jasmine flowers. The qualifier "white" represents her quest to be united with a state that is devoid of all distinctions. While Mahādevī makes human love a metaphor for mystic experience, Lallā makes the image of ascetic Śiva her ideal. One could perhaps say that what Mahādevī acquired through intense *bhaktiyoga* (path of devotion), Lallā achieved through concentrated *jñānayoga* (path of knowledge). The poetry of both women reveals their knowledge of the esoteric aspects of Śaivism. The paths they adopted were different, even as it seems their final objective was the same.

Exploring the Inner Landscape

A mystic's journey involves the exploration of the inner landscape of mind. Intially the world appears fragmented and divided, populated with a variety of colors, shapes and forms. The mystic's intuition reveals that permeating all the variety and diversity is the colorless, shapeless and formless light of consciousness.

Many of Lallā's verses specifically refer to Śaiva practices centered on breathing to reach inner focus, which is necessary to have higher states of awareness.

> Slowly through practicing breath control,
> the lamp shone
> and I saw my true nature.
> The inner light I realized—
> caught it in darkness and seized it. (V 46)

Her 'true nature' is the realization of the unity of the Self

and the self or, in other words, the non-dual nature of reality. It is essential to let go of ego-consciousness in order to have such an experience. Since self-consciousness always keeps dividing and separating what is otherwise continuous and interpenetrating the conflict from duality persists. In order to clarify the relationship of the Self to the self, Lallā uses the metaphor of water and two other of its forms as they appear in nature: ice and snow. When the clouds disperse and the sun reveals its face, both ice and snow melt and turn into water, even though as ice and snow they have their own unique properties as well as modes of existence specific to their condition:

> Cold changes water into ice or snow.
> Discernment shows the three different states
> are not really different.
> When the sun of consciousness shines,
> the plurality is dissolved into oneness.
> The universe appears throughout permeated with Śiva.
> (V 63)

The shining of the sun of consciousness here refers to the realization of one's unity with the Self when the subject/object duality is erased and the Self, the quintessential nature of both, is revealed in its fullness.

To elaborate further on this relationship, she compares the Self to the axle of a grindstone. The axle must be set into motion for the wheat to move into the middle portion to be ground between the flat stones of the grindstone. Without this action, the movement of the grindstone and consequently, that of the wheat would come to a standstill. The moving axle is the driving force that brings about the motion of the flat stones, which pulls the wheat in to be ground into fine flour:

> The grindstone moves
> when set in motion.
> The axle knows the mystery
> of the grindstone.
> When the grindstone moves,

fine flour comes out
as the wheat moves by itself
into the grindstone
to be crushed. (V 103)

The grindstone thus becomes a metaphor for human existence. To live an enlightened life, the self-aware individual takes control of the axle of life, the higher Self, in order to experience fully the dynamic weaving of the world from the light of consciousness.

Most of Lallā's verses thus comment on the continuity between the self and the Self and between the Self and the world. Individuals are not islands in the ocean of consciousness, but rather waves in the ocean, as their existence is intricately bound up with the reality out of which they emerge. She captures this continuity in the image of the Self as a net spread over the entire phenomenal world, in the meshes of which the individual existence takes shape.

Śiva is like a fine net spread everywhere,
subtly permeating the physical world.
If you don't see him while alive,
how can you do so when dead?
Through self-introspection,
remove the self from within yourself. (V 145)

Lallā relies on metaphors and similes from day to day life to convey her experiences, as she tailors her message to the audience she is addressing. She sometimes speaks of her experience in terms of devotion to Śiva, while at other times she describes Śiva as the transcendental reality. Elsewhere, she speaks of the need to do away entirely with duality of all kinds in order to find a new space for the actualizing self outside any dualistic framework. The most profound of Lallā's verses, then, convey the experience that is beyond any anthropomorphic representation. She compares the advanced stages of her spiritual journey to traveling through a field of void and her ultimate goal is to realize the state of *śūnya* or nothingness.

Teachings

Even though leading the life of an ascetic, Lallā is very much concerned with the welfare of the people in her community. Śaiva teachings were traditionally imparted only to a select few during her time. Lallā is the first woman we know of who openly speaks of these practices to common people in vernacular Kashmīrī language.

Lallā criticizes the elite who take great pride in their scholarly achievements. The scholar's knowledge of the tradition, she says, is no guarantee of genuine insight or wisdom. This view reflects her own position in relation to the Śaiva tradition in that she leaves the written tradition behind, and focuses on direct experience of that which is the subject of elaboration and discussion in the written tradition. In one of her verses she says that she learned some things from books, but others she learned through direct experience. Thus, she emphasizes direct experience above any elaborate study of religious texts. The strongest current that runs through Lallā's verses reflects her belief that enlightened perspective can be realized through one's own striving.

Lallā was quite secular in her outlook, which is perhaps the reason why both Hindus and Muslims have held her in such high esteem. She preached tolerance towards religious practices other than one's own and she refrained from identifying herself with any sect or religion. Legends speak of the Sūfī and Hindu mystics gathering together frequently to exchange ideas and experiences. The Sūfī mystics lived simple and devout lives and never abdicated their missionary spirit. Lallā's emphasis on religious tolerance may have been influenced by this free association with Sūfī mystics of her time. Her belief in religious tolerance, however, is also in agreement with the monist Śaiva philosophy that is secular in its orientation.

In her verses Lallā critiques prescriptive religious practices of all kinds and advises people not to differentiate between Hindus and Muslims, as Śiva, which is their own Self, is

omniscient and hence, beyond sectarian divisions. People might call this state Śiva, Keśava, Mahāvira, or Buddha, but these are just different names assigned to the same reality:

The Self may be named Śiva,
Keśava, or Mahāvīra
or the lotus born Buddha.
Whatever name it may have,
may it set free a weakling like me
from worldly afflictions. (V 12)

As a critic of prescriptive religious practices, Lallā points to the limited use of external worship or rituals of various kinds. Objects of ritual worship, for example, kuś grass, sesame seeds, lamp or water, are unnecessary in the same way as is making offerings of animals to idols. Thus, reciting prayers, chanting mantras, or turning rosary beads are not enough to move forward and make progress in spiritual awareness. Parrots can be taught to recite the name of Rāma, so repetition of a mantra in itself does not lead to self - knowledge:

Those without discernment, dear,
read religious books
as parrots recite "Rāma" in a cage.
Reading the Gītā becomes an excuse—
I have read the Gītā
and I am still reading it. (V 117)

She urges people not to confuse the aids to focus attention, for example, rituals or chanting of mantras, with the ultimate goal of the spiritual journey, which is self realization. Religious scriptures, according to her, are beneficial for beginners, but those who make a religion of recitation of scriptures are chasing illusion. The genuine progress in the spiritual journey of the novice happens only when the mind and the heart work together. Through various breathing exercises as well as meditations, the novice undergoes a transformation of mind and body and achieves higher levels of awareness.

Lallā regards people who are consumed by their quest for deeper answers as fully awake and those immersed only in material reality as asleep. The real temple is within each individual. Thus, she says, self-knowledge cannot be acquired by merely going to temples or going on pilgrimages:

Some renounce their home,
and some their hermitage.
All is futile
if the mind is not under control.
Meditate on your breath
day and night,
and stay wherever you are. (V 98)

To those desiring to live enlightened lives, Lallā advises moderation in drinking, eating, and clothing. She does not approve of starving the body through fasting or religious austerities. The real religious practice is to engage in actions performed in the spirit of detachment.

Don't torture your body
with thirst and starvation.
When the body is exhausted,
take care of it.
Cursed be your fasts
and religious ceremonies.
Be good to others—
that is the real religious practice. (V 118)

According to a legend, once her teacher Śrīkaṇṭha was bathing in the river, while Lallā was cleaning the outside of a pot full of dirt a little upstream. Śrīkaṇṭha, puzzled, asks her how she could possibly have a clean pot if she scrubbed it only from the outside. Lallā responds that how could he cleanse his body through bathing alone, without purifying his thoughts and feelings. This legend could be understood as Lallā's critique of hypocritical practices of people who engaged in ritual purification, while in the secular world they performed acts oppressive to others. Habitually

performing religious practices, she says, might give people satisfaction in engaging in something spiritual but in reality would do nothing to expand the limited vision that leads to religious bigotry and non-tolerance. She compares the path of wisdom to a kitchen garden that needs to be nurtured with self-restraint where good actions are performed with detachment.

Lallā is one of the few medieval women mystic poets worldwide who have left behind a legacy of great relevance to contemporary society. She urges people to have courage to seek their inner vision, instead of leading a life governed merely by social expectations. She brings our attention to the need for a morality based on honesty and personal responsibility, and provokes us to look beyond the veil of prohibitions and constraints imposed by social and religious institutions. The oral transmission of her verses over centuries testifies to her perennial appeal to people of all faiths.

Lallā lived during a time of great change and her words were meant to be a vehicle for change. Her verses can be seen as an instrument of change—an inner change—that must go hand in hand with any external political change of society. She urges us to create a society based on equality, mutual respect, and caring. Since the contemporary era also constitutes an age of transition, though now on a global scale, the themes that permeate her verses are as valid today as they were in medieval Kashmīr. For that reason, Lallā's verses are as relevant today as they were more than six centuries ago. No sanctified place or relic exists from Lallā's time marking the place of her death. A legend says when she died a bright flame shot forth from her body and vanished from sight. The flame might have vanished, but it continues to inform the spirit of Lallā's verses which enlighten and amaze us even today.

Key to Pronounciation

Key to Pronounciation of Kaśmīrī Verses Written in Modified Devanāgarī Script

A. Vowels

1. अ or (')	as in	अंड	=	half
		अंछ	=	eye
2. आ॑or (ı̇)	as in	दा॑र	=	window
		ला॑र	=	cucumber
3. उ or ()	as in	तुर	=	tatter
		खुर	=	slip
4. उॗ or (ॗ)	as in	तॗर	=	cold
		दॗफ	=	incense
5. ओ॒ or (ॊ)	as in	ओ॒न	=	blind
		सो॒न	=	deep

B. Consonants

1. च	c	as in	चोन	=	your
2. च़	ts	as in	च़ास	=	cough
			च़ल	=	go away
3. छ़	tsh	as in	छ़ाय	=	shadow
			गछ़	=	go
4. ज़	z	as in	ज़ल	=	water
			ज़ाल	=	net

Sounds in Kaśmīrī and the Diacritical Marks used in the Romanized Script

t = त th = थ ṭ = ट ṭh = ठ
d = द ḍ = ड

ŏ = short sound of o as in Kashmīrī क्वछि kŏcha = lap; mŏkh = face
ĕ = short sound of e as in Kashmīrī स्यख sĕkh = sand; च़्यथ tsĕth = mind

Lallā's Verses

The River of Life



1

आयस वते गंयस न॒ वते
सुमन स्वथि मंज़ लूस्तुम दोह
चंदस वुछुम त॒ हार न॒ अते
नाव॒ तारस दिम॒ क्याह बो॒ह

āyas vate gayas na vate
suman svathimaṅz lūstum doh
caṅdas vuchum ta hār na ate
nāva tāras dima kyāh bŏh

My path to this world was direct,
the road back is not.
The day passed by the riverside—
not a penny is in my pocket.
What would I pay to be ferried across?

2

आमि पन संदरस नावि छस लमान
कति बोज़ि दय म्योन म्यंति दियि तार
आम्यन टाक्यन पोञ ज़न शमान
ज़ुव छुम ब्रमान गर गछ़ह

āmi pana sadaras nāvi chas lamān
kati bozi day myon mĕti diyi tār
āmĕn tākĕn poñ zan shamān
zuv chum bramān gara gatshaha

I pull the boat with an untwisted rope.
Will god hear me
and help me across?
Water oozes from unbaked clay saucers.
My heart desires to go home.

3

हा च़्यत्ता कव छुय लो॒गमुत परमस
कव गो॒य अपज़िस पज़युक ब्रोंत
दो॒शिबोज़ वश को॒रनख परदरमस
यिन॒ गछ़न॒ ज्यन॒ मर॒नस क्रोंत

hā tsĕtta kava chuy lŏgmut paramas
kava gŏy apazis pazyuk bront
dŏśibŏz vash kŏrnakh pardarmas
yina gatshana zĕna maranas kront

Hey mind, why are you attached
to the external world?
Why do you mistake
illusory for the real?
Lack of wisdom has won you over
to the wrong path—
resigned to coming and going,
death and rebirth.

4

आयस कमि दिशि त॒ कमि वते
गछ़ कमि दिशि कव॒ जान॒ वथ
अन्ति दाय लगिमय तते
छांनिस फो॒कस कांह ति नो सथ

āyas kami dishi ta kami vate
gatsha kami dishi kava zāna vath
anti dāy lagimay tate
chänis phŏkas kāṅh ti no sath

From which direction did I come
and what road did I take?
Which direction shall I go?
How will I know the path?
Right guidance will finally come to my aid—
empty breath has no value.

5

लॅलिथ लॅलिथ वदय बो̱ह वाय
च़्यत्ता मुहुच प्यॅयिय माय
रोज़िय नो पत̱ लोह लङ्गर̱च छ़ाय
निज़̱ स्वरूप क्याह मो̱ठुय हाय

lalith lalith vaday bŏh vāy
tsĕtta muhuc pĕyiy māy
roziy no pata loha laṅgarac ṭshāy
niz svarūp kyāh mŏṭhuy hāy

I gently lament for you.
Mind, you are in love with illusion.
Not a shadow of this worldly splendor
will accompany you.
Oh, why do you forget your real nature?



6

नाबद्य बारस अटगंड ड्योल गोम
दिह कान होल गोम ह्यक् क्यहो
ग्वर सुन्द वनुन रावन त्योल प्योम
पहलि रोस्त ख्योल गोम ह्यक् क्यहो

nābadi bāras aṭagaṇḍ ḍyŏl gom
diha-kān hŏl gom hyaka kyaho
gvara sund vanun rāvan tyŏl pyom
pahali-rŏst khyŏl gom hyaka kyaho

Loosened is the shoulder knot
of my bundle of candy.
Bent like a bow is my body.
How can I carry this burden?
My guru's words
to achieve detachment are painful.
A flock without a shepherd I am—
how can I carry this burden?

7

हचिवि हॅरिंजि प्यॅचिव कान गोम
अबख छान प्योम यथ राज़्दाने
मंज़बाग बाज़रस कुल्फ़् रॊस्त वान गोम
तिर्थ्-रॊस्त पान गोम कुस मालि ज़ाने

hacivi härinji pĕtsiv-kān gom
abakh chān pyom yath rāzdāne
manzbāg bāzaras kulfa-rŏst vān gom
tirtha-rŏst pān gom kus māli zāne

A grass arrow fitted on a wooden bow I am.
My palace is in the hands
of an ignorant carpenter.[1]
In the midst of the market place I am
like a shop without a lock.
My body has become bereft of sanctity.
Who would understand my plight?

[1] The "grass arrow," "ignorant carpenter," and "shop without a lock" are metaphors for the novice self.

8

मंदुछि हाँकल कर छ़ेनयम
यलि ह्यंडुन गेलुन असुन प्राव्
आरुक जाम् करसना दज़्यम
यलि अन्द्रयुम खारयुक रोज़्यम वार्

mandachi häṅkal kar tshenĕm
yali hĕdun gelun asun prāva
āruk jāma karsanā dazĕm
yali andryum khāryuk rozĕm vāra

The chain of embarrassment will break
when I can tolerate taunts
and mocking words.
The robe of self-pity will burn away
when the inner unbridled horse[2] is under control.

---

[2] The "unbridled horse" represents the scattered nature of restless mind skipping from thought to thought aimlessly.

9

रुत त॒ क्रुत सोरुय पज़्यम
कनन न॒ बोज़ुन अ॑छयन न॒ बाव
ओरुक दपुन यलि वो॒न्दि वुज़्यम
र॑त्नदीप प्रज़ल्यम वरज़नि वाव॒

rut ta krut soruy pazěm
kanan na bozun achěn na bāva
oruk dapun yěli vǒndi vuzěm
ratandīp prazalěm varzani vāva

Both good and bad, I must endure.
My ears don't hear,
and my eyes don't see.
When the inner Self
awakens in my heart,
the lamp will shine
even in the midst of a tornado.

10

गाटुलाह अख वुछुम ब्वछि सांत्य मरान
पन ज़न हरान पो॒हनि वावलाह
न्यंषबो॒द अख वुछुम वाज़स मारान
तन॒ लल॒ बो॒ह प्रारान छ़्यन्यम न॒ प्राह

gātulāh akh vuchum bŏchi säty marān
pan zan harān pŏhani vāvalāh
nĕshabŏd akh vuchum vāzas mārān
tana lalla bŏh prārān tshĕnĕm na prāh

A wise one I saw dying of hunger
just as leaves fall
with the early winter wind.
And I saw a fool beating his cook.
Since then I, Lallā, am waiting
for the moment
when my worldly ties are severed.

11

आ॑सा बोल प॑डिन्यम सासा
म्य॑ मनिवासा खीद न ह्य॑ये
बो॒ह यो॒द सहज़॒ शंकर ब॑खच़ आसा॑
म॑कु॒रिस सासा मल क्याह प्य॑ये

äsā bol paḍiněm sāsā
mě manivāsā khīd na hěye
bŏh yŏd sahaza śaṅkara-bakts āsā
makaris sāsā mal kyāh pěye

Even if thousands of abuses
are hurled at me,
I am not hurt in my heart.
If I am a devotee
of all-pervading Self— Śaṅkara[3],
ashes will not soil the mirror.

---

[3] Śaṅkara is a name for Śiva.

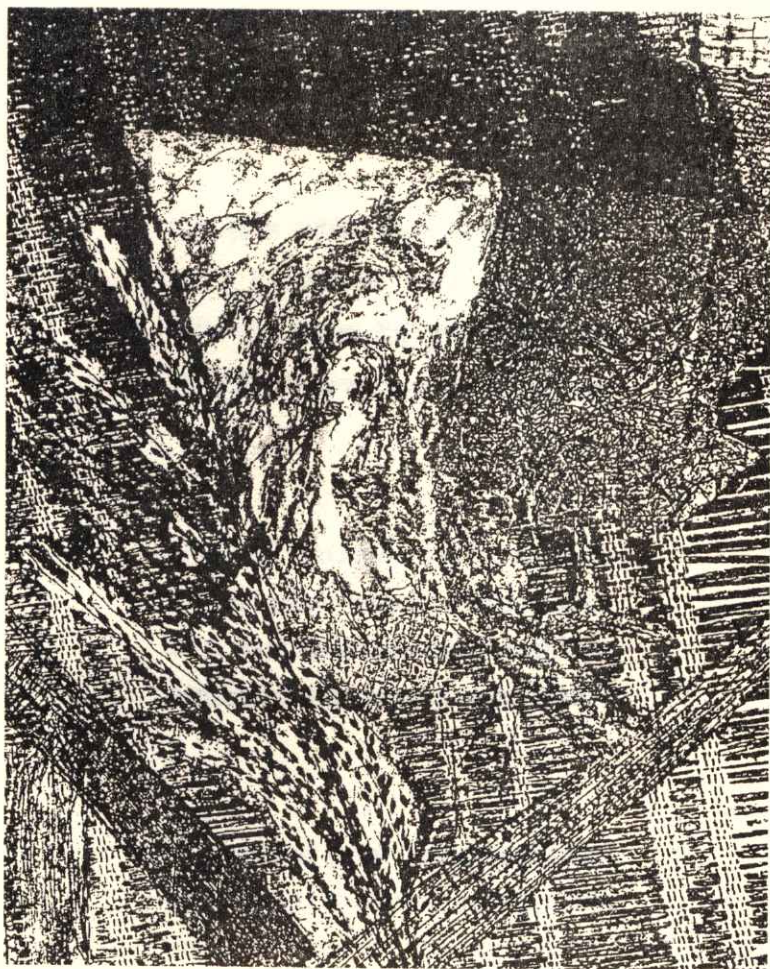
12

शिव वा कीशव वा जिन वा
कमलज़ नाथ नाम दारिन युह
म्यं अबलि कासितन बवरोज़
सुह वा सुह वा सुह वा सुह

śiva vā kīśava vā jin vā
kamalaza nāth nāma därin yuh
mĕ abali käsitan bavarŏz
suh vā suh vā suh vā suh

The Self may be named Śiva,
Keśava, or Mahāvīra
or the lotus-born Buddha.
Whatever name it may have,
may it set free a weakling like me
from worldly afflictions.

Crossing the River



13

लल् बो़ह द्रायस कप़सि पोशिचि सा'च़ई
का'डि त़ दूनि क'रनम यच़य लथ
तुयि यलि खा'रिनम् ज़ा'विजि तं'ये
बोवरि वान गं'यम अलांज़य लथ

lalla bŏh drāyas kapasi pośici sätsiy
kādi ta dūni karnam yatsay lath
tuyi yali khärinam zäviji taye
bovari vāna gayam alānzay lath

I, Lallā, set out hoping to bloom
like a cotton flower.
The ginner and the carder gave me hard blows.
After the spinner spun me into fine yarn,
I was stretched on the loom
in the weaver's shop.

14

दो॒ब्य यलि छा॑वनस दो॒ब्य कनि प्यठ॒य
सज़ त॒ साबन मछ़नम यच़॒य
सा॑चि़ यलि फिरनम हनि हनि का॑च़इ
अद॒ ललि म्यं प्रा॑वम परम ग॒थ

dŏbi yali chävanas dŏbi-kani pĕṭhay
saza ta sāban matshnam yatsay
sätsi yali phiranam hani hani kätsiy
ada lalli mĕ prävam parma gath

When the washerman dashed me
on a slab of stone,
rubbing me with much soap and washing soda
and the tailor cut me into bits with scissors,
I, Lallā, attained supreme bliss.

15

नाथा न॒ पान न॒ पर ज़ोनुम
सदै बूदुम यिकुय दिह
च़॒ बो॒ह बो॒ह च़॒ म्यूल न ज़ोनुम
च़॒ कुस बो॒ह क्वस॒ छु सन्दीह

nāthā na pān na par zonum
sadai būdum yekuy dih
tsa bŏh bŏh tsa myūl na zonum
tsa kus bŏh kŏsa chuh sandīh

Lord, the Self in myself and others
I did not recognize.
I have always known only this body.
You and I are joined in one,
I did not know.
My doubts remained:
who are you and who am I?

16

क्याह कर॒ पांच़न दह॒न त॒ काहन
वो॒क्षुन यथ ल्यंजि कंरिथ यिम गंय
सांरिय सम॒हन यंथ्य रज़ि लम॒हन
अद॒ क्याज़ि राविहे काहन गाव

kyāh kara päntsan dahan ta kāhan
vŏkhshun yath lĕji karith yim gay
säriy samahan yĕthi razi lamahan
ada kyāzi rāvihe kāhan gāv

What will I do
with the five, the ten, and the eleven?
They have all emptied out the cauldron.
If all had come together
and pulled the rope,
the eleven would not have lost the cow.[4]

---

[4] The "cauldron" is the physical body, the "five" are five *bhūtas* or principles of experience, the "ten" are the five sense organs plus the five organs of action, and the "eleven" are these ten organs and the mind. The "cow" symbolilzes the Śiva consciousness.

17

यिमय श्यं च़्यं तिमय श्यं म्यं
श्यामगला च़्यं ब्योन तांठिस
युहोय ब्यंनबीद च़्यं त म्यं
च़ं श्यंन स्वामी बो॒ह श्यंयि मशिस

yimay śĕ tsĕ timay śĕ mĕ
śyāmagalā tsĕ byŏn täṭhis
yuhŏy bĕnabīd tsĕ ta mĕ
tsa śĕn svāmī bŏh śĕyi maśis

You have the same six attributes[5] as I do.
Blue-throated One,[6]
without you I am afflicted.
The difference between you and me—
you are master of the six,
whereas I am deluded by the six.

[5] The six attributes are anger, bewilderment, arrogance, passion, jealousy, and avarice.

[6] Śiva is also called the "Blue-throated One" in the mythological literature.

18

लोलकि वो॒खल व॑लिंज पिशिम
क्वकल च़जिम त॒ रूज़स रस॒
बुज़ुम त॒ ज़॑जिम पानस चशिम
कव॒ ज़ान तव॒ सा॑त्य मर॒ किन॒ लस॒

lolaki vŏkhala väliṅj piśim
kvakal tsajim ta rūzas rasa
buzam ta zäjim pānas caśim
kava zāna tava sätya mara kina lasa

I ground my heart in the mortar of love.
Evil thoughts left me
and I became calm.
I burned and roasted it
and tasted it myself.
How do I know
if this practice will let me live or die?



19

पो॒त ज़ूनि व॑थिथ मो॒त बो॒ल॒नोवुम
दग लल॒ना॑व॒म दयि संज़ि प्रहे
ललि ललि करान लाल वुज़॒नोवुम
मीलिथ तस मन श्रोच़्योम दहे

pŏt zūni vathith mŏt bolanovum
dag lalanävam dayi sanzi prahe
lalli lalli karān lāla vuzanovum
mīlith tas man shrotsyom dahe

Awakening in the early dawn,
I summoned the restless mind.
Enduring the pain,
I devoted myself to god.
Saying "I am Lallā, I am Lallā,"
I awakened my darling.
On becoming one with him,
I purified my mind and body.

20

ल्यक॒ त॒ थवक॒ प्यठ शेरि ह्यच़म्
न्यन्दा सपनिम पथ ब्रोंठ तान्य
लल छ्यस कल ज़ांह नो छ़्यनिम
अद यलि सपनिस व्यपिहे क्याह

lĕka ta thŏka pĕth sheri hĕtsam
nyandā sapanim path bronṭh tāni
lalla chĕs kal zānh no tshĕnim
ada yali sapanis vĕpihe kyāh

I endured verbal abuse and slander.
Scandals broke out
about my past and present.
I am Lallā
and my yearning never stopped.
When I achieved my goal,
nothing affected me.

21

ज़नम प्रा॑विथ व्यबव न॒ छ़ोंडुम
लूबन बूगन ब॑र॒म न॒ प्रय
सो॒मुय आहार स्यठाह ज़ोनुम
च़ोलुम द्वःख॒ वाव पोलुम दय

zanam prävith vĕbav na tshoṇḍum
lūban būgan baram na pray
sŏmuy āhār sĕṭhāh zonum
tsolum dŏkh-vāv polum day

In life I did not desire affluence.
Nor did I love greed or enjoyment of luxuries.
Moderate meals I considered sufficient for me.
I endured suffering and poverty
and remained devoted to god.

22

ग्वरस पृछ़ोम सासि लटे
यस नु केंह वनान तस क्याह नाव
पृछ़ान पृछ़ान थचिस तु लूसस
केंहनस निशि क्याहताम द्राव

gvaras pritshom sāsi late
yas na kĕṅh vanān tas kyāh nāv
pritshān pritshān thacis ta lūsas
kĕṅhnasa nishi kyāhtām drāv

Again and again I asked my guru—
What is the name of the undefinable?
Repeated questioning
tired and exhausted me—
something has come out of this nothing.

23

लल् बोह् लूसंस छ़ांडान त् गारान
हल म्यं को्रमस रसनिशंतिय
वुछुन ह्यो्तमस तांर्य डीठिमस बरन
म्यति कल गनेयम त् ज़ोगमस त्तिय

lalla bŏh lūsas tshāṇḍān ta gārān
hal mĕ kŏrmas rasaniśatiy
vuchun hyŏtmas tärya dīṭhimas baran
mĕti kal gañeyam ta zogmas tatiy

I, Lallā, became tired
searching so eagerly.
I put more effort into it
than I was capable of.
When I started seeing,
I saw the doors bolted—
my yearning increased
and I kept a watch there.

24

अंद्रिय आयस त्संदरय गारान
गारान आयस हिह्यन हिह
त्सांय है नारान त्सांय है नारान
त्सांय है नारान यिम कम विह

andriy āyas tsandaray gārān
gārān āyas hihĕn hih
tsäy hai nārān tsäy hai nārān
tsäy hai nārān yim kam vih

From within I came searching for the moon.
I continued seeking similar symbols.
You are god[7],
you are god,
and you are god—
why these distinctions?

---

[7] The word "nārān" specifically means God Viṣṇu but also refers to any god.

The Field of Void



25

ये ग्वरा परमीश्वरा
बावतम च़्यं छुय अन्तर व्योद
द्वशिवय वोपदान कंद-पुरा
हुह कव त्रुन त हाह कव तोत

ye gvarā paramīśvarā
bāvtam tsěy chuy antar vyŏd
dvaśivay vŏpadān kanda-purā
huh kava türun ta hāh kava tŏt

You, guru, Parameśvara,
reveal to me the inner truth you know.
Both prāṇas arise
from the abode of the navel cakra.
Why is *huh* cold
and *hāh* hot?[8]

[8] In this and the next verse, Lallā refers to the meditation on the inhaled and the exhaled breath, a basic practice of Kashmīrī Śaivism. The *brahmarandhra* is the seventh cakra.

26

नाबिस्थानस छय प्रक्रथ ज़ल̱व̱नी
हिदिस्ताम यंति प्राण वत̱गो̱त
ब्रह्माण्डस प्यठ सांत नद वहवनी
हुह तव̱ तुरुण त̱ हाह तव̱ तो̱त

nābisthānas chay prakrath zalavanī
hidistām yĕti prān vatagŏt
brahmāṇḍas pyetha sät nad vahavani
huh tava türun ta hāh tava tŏt

The region of the navel is naturally ablaze.
The breath moves up the throat
to the *brahmarandhra*
from which the river flows.
For this reason, *Huh* is cold
and *Hāh* is hot.

27

दिहचि लरि दारि-बर त्रोपरिम
प्राण-च्चूर रोटुम त द्युतमस दम
हृदयिचि कूठरि अन्दर गोंडुम
ओंमकि चोबुक तुलिमस बम

dihaci lari dāri bar trŏparim
prāna tsūr rŏṭum ta dyutmas dam
hrĕdyici kūṭhari andar gŏṇdum
oṃaki cobuka tulimas bam

Doors and windows of my body I closed.
The prāṇa-thief I caught
and brought under control.
I tied it inside the chamber of my heart.
I whipped it with the syllable Oṃ.

28

ओंकार यलि लयि ओ़नुम
वुहि को़रुम पनुन पान
श्यं वो़त त्रांविथ त़ सथ मार्ग रो़टुम
त्यलि लल़ बो़ह वांचस प्रकाशस्थान

oṃkār yĕli layi ŏnum
vuhi kŏrum panun pān
śĕ vŏta trävith ta sath mārg rŏṭum
tĕli lalla bŏh vätsas prakāśasthān

I became absorbed in the sacred syllable Oṃ.
I burned myself like coal.
Leaving behind six paths,
I seized the seventh—
and then, I, Lallā, reached the abode of light.

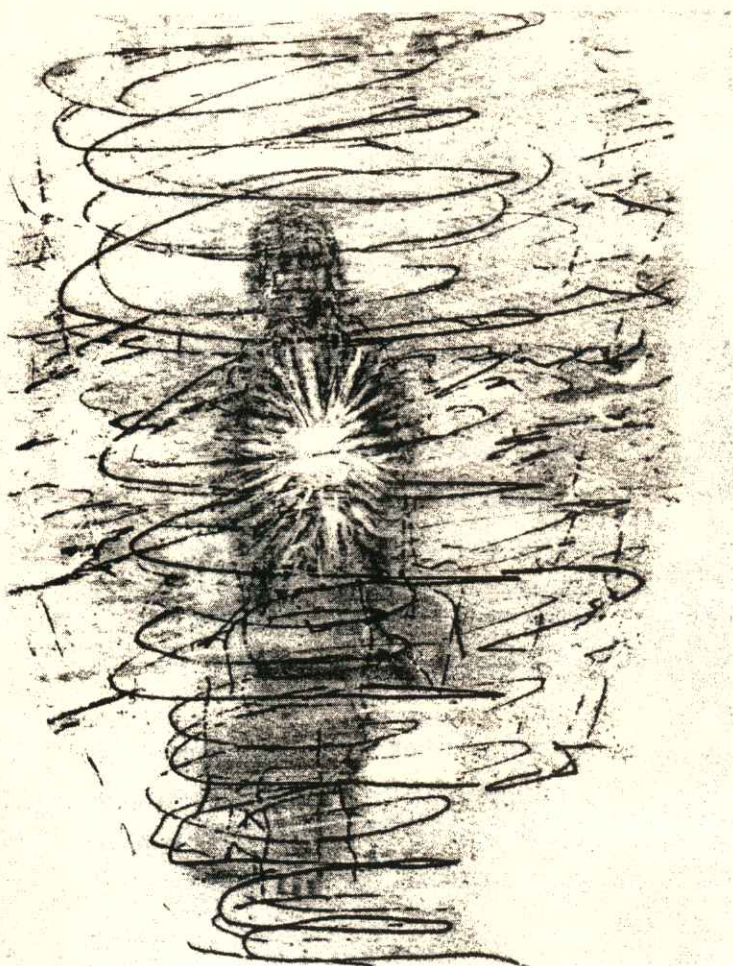
29

च़्यंत॒ तुर्ग वगिह्यथ रो॒टुम
च़्यलिथ मिल॒विथ दशिनाडि वाव
तवय शशिकल व्यंगलिथ व॒छ्यंम
शून्यस शून्याह मीलिथ गव

tsĕta turg vagihĕth rŏṭum
tsĕlith milavith dashināḍi vāv
tavay śaśikal vĕgalith vatshäm
śūnyas śūnyāh mīlith gav

I took the reins of the mind-horse.
Through practice, I learned breath control.
Then only the orb of the moon melted[9]
and dripped down into my body—
nothingness merged with nothingness.

[9] The "orb of the moon" refers to the seventh cakra.



30

अन्दर आ॑सिथ न्यबर छ़ोन्डुम
पवनन रगन क॒रनम सथ
द्यान॒ किनि दय ज़गि कीवल ज़ोनुम
रंग गव संगस मीलिथ क्यथ

aṅdar äsith nĕbar tshonḍum
pavanan ragan karnam sath
dyāna kini day zagi kīval zonum
raṅg gav sangas mīlith kĕth

Though within, I searched outside.
The control of breath
soothed my inner channels.
Through meditation, I realized that
god and the world are one—
the manifest world merged with the unmanifest.

31

बान गो़ल तय प्रकाश आव ज़ूने
च़ंदर गो़ल तय मो़तुय च़्यथ
च़्यथ गो़ल तय केंहति ना कुने
गै भूर भुवाह स्वर व्यसर्ज़िथ क्यथ

bān gŏl tay prakāśa āv zūne
tsandar gŏl tay mŏtuy tsĕth
tsĕth gŏl tay keṅhti nā kune
gay bhūr bhuvāh svar vĕsarzith kĕth

The sun sets,
the moon shines.
The moon vanishes,
consciousness remains.
Consciousness disappears,
nothingness remains—
the physical, spiritual, and metaphysical
merge into nothingness.

32

पानस लाऺगिथ रूदुख म्यऺ च़॒
म्यऺ च़्यऺ छ़ान्डान लूस्तुम दोह
पानस मंज़ यऺलि ड्यूठुख म्यऺ च़॒
म्यऺ च़्यऺ त॒ पानस द्युतुम छ़ोह

pānas lägith rūdukh mĕ tsa
mĕ tsĕ tshāṇḍān lūstum doh
pānas manz yĕli ḍyūṭhukh mĕ tsa
mĕ tsĕ ta pānas dyutum tshoh

When I was attached to the self,
you remained hidden from me.
Time passed as I searched for you.
When I saw you within—
you and I were united
in ecstasy.

33

दिशि आयस दश दिशि तीलिथ
च़्यलिथ च़्ोटुम शून्य अद् वाव
शिवय ड्यूठुम शायि शायि मीलिथ
श्यं त् त्रेह त्रांपिमस त् शिवय द्राव

dishi āyas dasha dishi tīlith
tsĕlith tsŏṭum śūnya ada vāv
śivay ḍyūṭhum śāyi śāyi mīlith
śĕ ta trĕh träpimas ta śivay drāv

After wandering in ten directions,
I found the true path.
Through breath control,
I penetrated the void—
Śiva I saw permeating all.
Shutting the six and the three,[10]
I found Śiva the root cause of all.

---

[10] The "six" refers to the five sense organs and the mind, while the "three" are the three body openings.

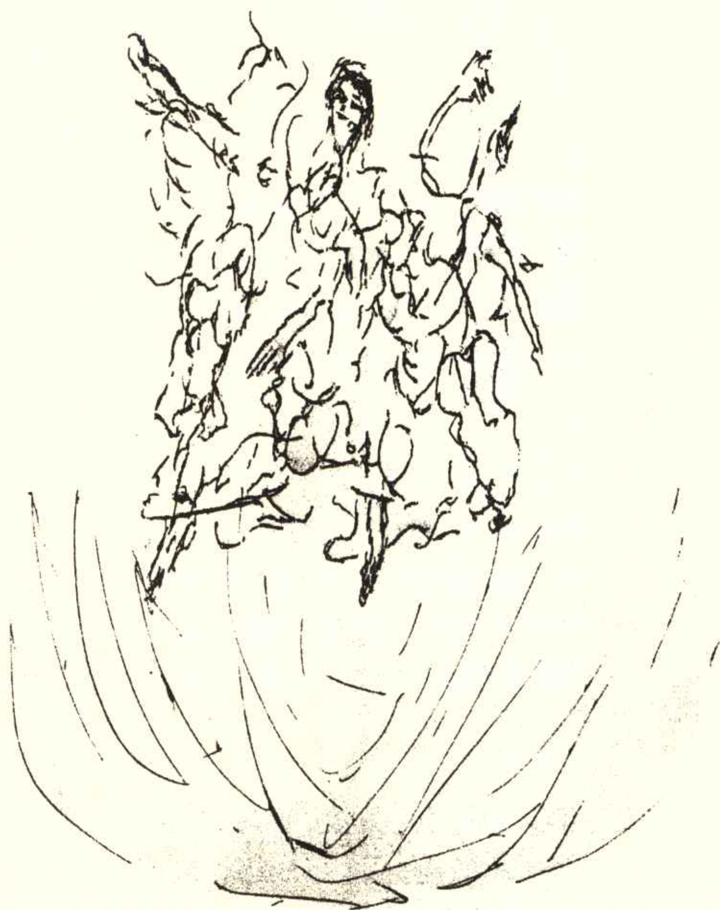
34

तन॒ मन॒ गयस बो॒ह तस कुनंय
बूज़म सत॒च गन्टा वज़ान
तथ जायि दारनायि दारन रटंम
अकाश त॒ प्रकाश को॒रुम सर॒

tana mana gayas bŏh tas kunay
buzam sataca gaṅṭā vazān
tath jāyi dārnāyi dāran raṭam
akāśa ta prakāśa kŏrum sara

Physically and mentally
absorbed in That,
I heard the bell of truth ring.
In that state, I meditated—
I realized the manifest
and the unmanifest.

A Lotus Blooms



35

शून्युक मांदान कोडुम पानस
म्यं ललि रूज़॒म न॒ ब्वद न॒ होश
बेदीय सप॒निस पानय पानस
अद॒ कमि गिलि फो॒ल ललि पम्पोश

śūnyuk mädān koḍum pānas
mĕ lalli rūzam na bŏd na hosh
bedīy sapanis pānay pānas
ada kami gili phŏl lalli pamposh

Traversing the field of void alone,
I, Lallā, lost consciousness of myself.
On finding the secret of my Self,
a lotus bloomed in the mud for Lallā.[11]

[11] In Indian literature, the lotus is used to symbolize the higher self that emerges out of the entangled world of senses.

36

गगन च्रांय बूतल च्रांय
च्रांय छुख द्यन पवन त़ राथ
अर्ग च़न्दन पोश पोञ च्रांय
च्रांय छुख सोरुय त़ लांगिज़िय क्याह

gagan tsäy būtal tsäy
tsäy chukh dĕn pavan ta rāth
arg tsandan poś poñ tsäy
tsäy chukh soruy ta lägiziy kyāh

You are the sky,
and you are the earth.
You are the day,
the night and the wind.
You are grain,
sandalwood, flowers, and water.
You are everything—
what should I offer you?

37

लतन हुन्द माज़ लार्योम वतन
अकिय हांवनम अकिचिय वथ
यिम यिम बोज़न तिम कोन् मतन
ललि बूज़ शतन कुनिय कथ

latan hund māz lāryom vatan
akiy hävnam akiciy vath
yim yim bozan tim kona matan
lalli būz shatan kuniy kath

Soles of my feet wore off
on different paths.
Only one showed me the true path.
Those who hear this,
why aren't they enamored?
Lallā heard but one word
in a hundred words.

38

पंरुम पोलुम अपोरुय पुरुम
केसर् वन् वोलुम रंटिथ शाल
परस प्रोनुम त् पानस पोलुम
अद् गोम मोलूम त् ज़ीनिम हाल

parum polum apŏruy purum
kesara vana volum raṭith śāl
paras prŏnum ta pānas polum
ada gom molūm ta zīnim hāl

What I read, I followed.
The unreadable I realized
through direct experience.
I tamed the lion[12] from the forest like a jackal.
My teachings for others, I followed myself.
Then I attained knowledge
and achieved my goal.

---

[12] The lion is a metaphor for desires that continually entangle humans in worldly affairs. The subduing of desires is represented by the transformation of the lion into the jackal.

39

च़्यथ नो॒वुय च़ंद्रम नो॒वुय
ज़लमय ड्यूठुम नवम नो॒वुय
यन॒ प्यठ॒ ललि म्यं तन-मन नांवुय
तन॒ लल॒ बो॒ह नवम नंवय छयस

tsĕth nŏvuy tsandaram nŏvuy
zalamay ḍyūṭhum navam nŏvuy
yana pĕtha lalli mĕ tan man nävuy
tana lalla bŏh navam navay chĕs

The consciousness is new,
and the moon is new.
I saw the whole universe
moment by moment renewed.
Ever since I, Lallā, cleansed
my body and mind,
I, Lallā, have become ever renewed.

40

दंमी डीठंम नद वहवनी
दंमी ड्यूठुम सुम नत् तार
दंमी डीठंम थंर् फव्लवनी
दंमी ड्यूठुम गुल नत् खार

damī ḍiṭham nad vahavanī
damī ḍyūṭhum sum nata tār
damī ḍiṭham thara phŏlavanī
damī ḍyūṭhum gul nata khār

Just now I saw a flowing river.
And then I saw a vast expanse of water
without a bridge or a ferry.
Just now I saw a shrub
with blooming flowers
and then I saw neither flowers nor thorns.[13]

---

[13] Lallā imagines herself outside time as she surveys the coming into existence and disappearance into nothingness of the objects and processes of the material world. The "flowing river," the "lake," the "shrub with blossoming flowers, the "fire ablaze in the hearth" all come and go.

41

लल॒ बो॒ह द्रायस लोल॒ रे
छ़ांडान लूस्तुम द्‌यन क्यो॒ह राथ
वुछुम पंडिथ पन॒नि गरे
सुय म्यं रो॒ट॒मस न्यछतुर त॒ साथ

lalla bŏh drāyas lola re
tshāṇḍān lūstum dyĕn kyŏh rāth
vuchum paṇḍith panani gare
suy mĕ rŏṭamas nĕchtur ta sāth

Full of love I set out.
Day and night I spent searching.
In my own home I met the Paṇḍit.
I caught him and this was
my auspicious moment.

42

परुन स्वलब पालुन द्वर्लब
सहज़ गारुन सिखिम त् क्रूठ
अब्यासि्कि गनिरय शास्त्र मो्ठुम
त्सीतन् आनन्द न्यश्चय गोम

parun svalab pālun dvarlab
sahaz gārun sikhim ta krūṭh
abyāsaki ganiray shāstra mŏṭhum
tsītan ānand nĕshcay gom

Easy to read, but hard to follow.
Attaining self-knowledge
is subtle and difficult.
Absorbed in practice,
I forgot the scriptures—
consciousness-bliss I realized.

43

यि यि करम को̮रुम सुह अर्चुन
यि रसनि वो̮च़ोरुम तिय मंथर
युहय लो̮गमो दिहस पर्चुन
सुय यि परम शिवुन तंथर

yi yi karam kŏrum suh artsun
yi rasani vŏtsorum tiy manthr
yuhai lŏgamo dihas partsun
suy yi parama śivun tanthr

Deeds I performed became offerings.
Words I spoke became mantra.
Experiences my body had
were for self-knowledge.
This is the essence of Śiva's way.

44

मल वोन्दि ज़ोलुम
जिगर मोरुम
त्यंलि लल् नाव द्राम
यंलि दंलि त्रांविमस तती

mal vŏṅdi zolum
jigar morum
tĕli lalla nāv drām
yali dali trävimas tatī

Impurities of the heart I burned.
Desires I killed.
Lallā, my name, shone only
when I surrendered completely.

The Light of Consciousness



45

ज़्ांय दीव़् गर्तस त़् दर्ती स्रज़ख
च्ये दीव दितिथ क्रन्ज़न प्रान
ज़्ांय दीव़् ठनि रो़स्तुय वज़ख
कुस ज़ानि दीव़् चोन परिमान

tsäy dīva gartas ta dartī srazakh
tsĕy dīva ditith kranzan prān
tsäy dīva ṭhani rŏstuy vazakh
kus zāni dīva con parimān

You, god, permeate the creation on the earth.
You, god, give life to matter.
You, god, resonate without sound.
Who can fathom you?

46

दमाह दम को़रमस दमनहाले
प्रज़ल्योम दीफ त़ ननेयम ज़ाथ
अन्द्रियुम प्रकाश न्यंबर छो़टुम
गटि रोटुम त़ कंरमस थफ

damāh dam kŏrmas damanhāle
prazalyom dīph ta nañeyam zāth
andrium prakāśa nĕbar tshŏṭum
gaṭi roṭum ta karmas thaph

Slowly through practicing breath control,
the lamp shone
and I saw my true nature.
The inner light I realized—
caught it in darkness and seized it.

47

ग्यान̱कि अम्बर पारिथ तने
यिम पद ललि दपि तिम ह्रयदि आंख
कारन̱ प्रन̱वकि लयि को̱र लले
च़्यथ-ज्योति कासन मर̱न्̱य शांख

gyanki ambar pärith tane
yim pad lalli dapi tim hrĕdi aṅkh
kārana pranavaki layi kŏr lalle
tsĕth-jyoti käsan maranañi shaṅkh

Wear the garments of wisdom.
Inscribe verses recited by Lallā
in your heart.
Through *praṇava*[14] Lallā was absorbed
in the light of consciousness.
She overcame the fear of death.

---

[14] *Praṇava* involves meditation on the sacred syllable Oṃ.

48

च्यदानंदस ग्यान् प्रकाशस
यिमव च्यून तिम ज़ीवन्ती मोख्त
व्यशमस सम्सारनिस पाशयस
अबोध गंडाह शथ शथ दितिय

tsědānandas gyāna prakāśas
yimav tsyūn tim zīvantī mŏkht
věśamas samsāranis pāśyas
abŏdh gaṇḍah śath śath ditiy

Those who achieve light-consciousness-bliss
are liberated while alive.
Tangled in the net of worldly existence,
ignorant people tie a hundred knots.

49

परान परान ज़्यव ताल फंजिम
च़्यं युगि क्रिय तंजिम न̱ ज़ांह
सुमरन फिरान न्योठ त̱ ओ̱ंग̱ज गंजिम
मन̱च̱ दुयि मालि च़जिम न̱ ज़ांह

parān parān zyav tāl phajim
tsĕ yugi kriy tajim na zāṅh
sumran phirān nyoṭh ta ŏngaj gajim
manaca duyi māli tsajim na zāṅh

Reading and reciting continuously
turned my tongue and palate sore—
I never found a practice befitting you.
Turning the rosary beads
wore out my thumb and finger—
yet my mind's confusion, my dear,
did not leave me.

50

ग्वरन वो̱न̱नम कुनुय वचुन
न्यबर दो̱प̱नम अन्द̱रय अचुन
सुय गव ललि म्यं वाख त̱ वचुन
तवय म्यं ह्यो̱तुम नंगय नचुन

gvaran vŏnanam kunuy vatsun
nĕbara dŏpanam andaray atsun
suy gav lalli mĕ vākh ta vatsun
tavay mĕ hyŏtum nangay natsun

My guru gave me only one advice—
from outside transfer the attention within.
That became Lallā's initiation—
that is why I began to wander naked.

51

असी आंसि तय अंसीय आसव
असिय दोर करि पतवथ
शिवस सोरि न् ज़्योन् त् मरुन
रवस सोरि न् अतगथ

asī äsi tay asīy āsav
asiy dor kari patavath
śivas sori na zyŏn ta marun
ravas sori na atagath

In the past we existed,
in the future we shall be,
and through the ages we have been.
Śiva continues to create and destory
just as the sun continues to rise and set.

52

दमी डीठ̱म गज द̱ज़̱व̱नी
दमी ड्यूठुम दह न̱ त̱ नार
दमी डीठम पाण्डवन हन्ज़ मांजी
दमी डीठ̱म क्रांजी मास

damī ḍīṭham gaj dazvanī
damī ḍyūṭhum dah na ta nār
damī ḍīṭham pāṇḍvan hanz mäjī
damī ḍiṭham kräjī mās

Just now I saw
a fire ablaze in the hearth.
And then I saw
neither smoke nor fire.
Just now I saw
the mother of Pāṇḍavas
and then I saw her
as the aunt in the potter's house.[15]

---

[15] This verse is a metaphor for the shifting fortunes in the material world. The reference here is specifically to the story of the Pāṇḍavas' fortune and misfortune in the Mahābhārata.

53

द्वादशान्त् मंडल यस दीवस थजि
नासिक पवन् दारि अनाहत् रव
स्वयम कल्पन अंतिह च़जि
पानय सु दीव त् अर्च़ुन कस

dvādashānta maṇḍal yas dīvas thaji
nāsika pavana däri anāhata rav
svayam kalpan antih tsaji
pānay su dīv ta artsun kas

Whoever realizes *brahmarandhra* cakra
as the abode of the deity,
hears the all-pervasive,
unobstructed sound through breath control
and ends self-delusion,
she herself is the deity.
Then who should she worship?

54

कुस डिंगि त़ कुस ज़ागि
कुस सर वतरि तेलिय
कुस हरस पूज़ि लागि
कुस परम़पद मेलिय

kus dingi ta kus zāgi
kus sar vatari teliy
kus haras pūzi lāgi
kus paramapad meliy

Who is asleep
and who is awake?
From which lake does water ooze out?
What can be offered in worship to god?
What supreme state
is to be attained?

55

मन डिंगि त़ अक्वल ज़ागि
दांडय सर पंच़-यंदि वतरि तेलिय
स्वव्यचाऱ पोञ हरस पूज़ि लागि
परम़पद च़ीत़न शिव मेलिय

man dingi ta akval zāgi
däḍi sar pañtsa yaṅdi vatari teliy
svavĕtsāra poñ haras pūzi lāgi
paramapad tsītan śiva meliy

Mind is asleep,
and the nameless Self is awake.
Five sense organs are the lake
from which water constantly oozes.
Self-introspection is the oblation to god.
Śiva consciousness
is the supreme state to be achieved

56

शिव गुर तय कीशव पलनस
ब्रह्मा पायर्यन वो़लांस्यस
यूगी यूग-कलि परज़ान्यस
कुस दीव अश्ववार प्यठ चडयस

śiva gur tay kīśava palanas
brahmā pāyrĕn vŏläsĕs
yūgī yūg kali parzānĕs
kus dīva ashvavār pĕṭh ceḍyĕs

Śiva is the horse,
Keśava is the saddle
and Brahmā is on the stirrups.
A yogi through yogic practice
recognizes the One
riding the horse.

57

अनाहत् ख-स्वरूप शून्यालय
यस नाव न् वरन न् गुथ्र् न् रूप
अहं विमर्श नाद्-ब्यंद्य यस वो्न
सुय दीव अश्ववार प्यठ चडयस

anāhata kha-svarūp śūnyālay
yas nāv na varan na guthr na rūp
ahaṃ vimarśa nād-bĕnday yas vŏn
suy dīva ashvavār pĕṭh ceḍĕs

The unstruck sound of Oṃ,[16]
all permeating,
whose abode is void,
without name,
colour, caste or form.
Self-introspection reveals
the unsounded resonance.
That is the deity riding the horse.

[16] This specific Kashmīrī Śaiva practice involves developing focused attention through disengaging oneself from sensory perceptions, withdrawing within, and exercising breath control and silent absorption in the sound Oṃ.

58

शिशिरस वुथ कुस रटे
कुस ब्वके रटे वाव
युस पाँछ़ यिंदरय च़्यलिथ च़टे
सुय रटे गटे रव

shishiras vuth kus raṭe
kus bŏke raṭe vāv
yus päntsh yindray tsĕlith tsaṭe
suy raṭe gaṭe rav

Who can stop the drip from icicles?
Who can hold air in the palm?
She who controls the five sense organs
sees the sun in the darkness.

59

च़्यत॒ तुर्ग गगन॒ ब्रम॒वोन
निमिशि अकि छ़न्डि यूज़न॒ लछ
च़्यत॒नि वगि ब्वदि र॑टिथ ज़ोन
प्राण-अपान सन्दा॑रिथ पख॒च

tsĕta turg gagna bramavon
nimiśi aki tshaṇḍi yūzan lach
tsĕtani vagi bŏdi raṭith zon
prān-apān sandärith pakhac

The mind-horse wanders all over
with the flicker of an eyelid,
traveling a hundred thousand leagues.
Whoever holds the reins
with self-restraint and discrimination,
succeeds in controlling
the inhaled and the exhaled breath.

60

अब्यासी सव्यकास लय् वो॒थू
गग॒नस सगुन म्यूल समिच्ऱटा
शून्य गो॒ल त अनामय मो॒तू
युहो॒य वो॒पंदीश छुय बटा

abyāsī savyakās laya vŏthū
gaganas sagun myūl samitsraṭā
śūnya gŏl ta anāmay mŏtū
yuhŏy vŏpadīsh chuy baṭā

Through constant practice,
the objective reality is withdrawn.
The world of forms and colors
suddenly merges with the void.
When the void disappears,
nameless consciousness remains.
This is my teaching, Paṇḍit!

61

त्स़ नु बोह नु देय नु द्यान
गौ पानय सर्वक्रिय मंशिथ
अन्यव ड्यूठुख कैंछ़ नु अन्वय
गंय सथ लयि पर पंशिथ

tsa na bŏh na deya na dyān
gav pānay sarva kriy maśith
anyav ḍyūṭhukh keṅtsh na anvay
gayi sath layi par paśith

Neither you nor I,
and neither meditation
nor the object of meditation exist.
The All-doer forgets Himself.
The blind find this meaningless.
The wise become one
with this supreme state.

62

द्यन छ्यज़ि त् रज़न आसे
बूतल गगनस कुन व्यकासे
च़न्दर राह ग्रोस मावसे
शिव्-पूज़ुन गौ च़ित्तात्मसे

dĕn tshĕzi ta razan āse
būtal gaganas kun vĕkāse
tsandar rāh grŏs māvase
śiva puzun gav tsittātmase

The day passes into the night.
The earth reaches out for the sky.
On the day of the new moon,
the moon swallows Rāhu.[17]
Śiva's worship is the realization
of the self as consciousness.

---

[17] Rāhu is the demon of eclipse in Indian mythology.

63

त्‌रि सलिल̱ खो̱त̱ तय त्‌रे
ह्यमि त्रे गय ब्यो̱न-अब्यो̱न व्यमर्शा
च़ैतन्य रव बाति सब समे
शिव̱मय च़राच़र ज़ग पश्या

türi salila khŏta tay türe
hĕmi trĕ gay byŏn abyŏn vĕmarśā
tsaitani rav bāti sab same
śivamay tsarātsar zag paśya

Cold changes water into ice or snow.
Discernment shows the three different states
are not really different.
When the sun of consciousness shines,
the plurality is dissolved into oneness.
The universe appears throughout permeated with Śiva.

64

शील त̱ मान छुय पोञ क्रंजे
म्वछि यमि रोट मलि यो̱द वाव
होस्त युस मस्त वाल गन्डे
ति यस तगि तय सु अद̱ न्यहाल

shīl ta mān chuy poñ kranje
mŏchi yami rot mali yŏd vāv
hosta yus mastavāl gaṇḍe
ti yas tagi tay su ada nĕhāl

Name and fame
are like water in a sieve.
Whoever has strength
to hold air in a fist
and tie an elephant
with a strand of hair
will certainly attain bliss.

The House of Nectar



65

छ़ांडाऩ लूसस पांनिय-पानस
छ़यपिथ ग्यानस वोतुम न कूंछ़
लय कंरमस त वांच़स अलथानस
बरि बरि बान त च्यवान न कूंह

tshāṇḍān lūsas päniy pānas
tshĕpith gyānas votum na kuṅtsh
lay karmas ta vätsas althānas
bari bari bāna ta cĕvān na kūṅh

Arduous was my search for the Self.
Nothing compares to the hidden knowledge.
Self-absorption led me
to the house of nectar—
cups I found filled to the brim,
but nobody was drinking.

66

यि क्याह आंसिथ यि क्युथ रंग गोम
चंग गोम त्रटिथ हुद हुदंन्यीय दंगय
सारिनिय पदन कुनिय वखुन प्योम
ललि म्यं त्राग गोम लग् कमि शांठय

yi kyāh äsith yih kyuth raṅg gom
caṅg gom tsaṭith huda hudaněy dagay
sāriniy padan kunuy vakhun pyom
lalli mě trāg gom laga kami shāṭhay

What was I
and what has become of me?
My attachments are severed.
All verses echo only one thing.
I, Lallā, have become a lake.
Where shall I find my shore?

67

श्यं वन च़टिथ शशिकल वुज़ंम
प्रक्रथ हन्ज़ंम पवन् सांती
लोल्कि नार् वांलिंज बुज़ंम
शंकर लोबुम तमिय सांती

śĕ van tsaṭith śaśikal vuzam
prakrath hanzam pavana sätī
lolaki nāra välinj buzam
śaṅkara lobum tamiy sätī

After traversing six forests,[18]
I awakened the orb of the moon.
By controlling my breath,
I gave up attachment to worldly things.
I roasted my heart
in the fire of love—
I found Śaṅkara that way.

---

[18] The "six forests" refer to the six cakras or energy centers along the spine— *mūlādhāra, svādhiṣṭhāna, maṇipura, anāhata, viśuddhā, ājñā*

68

म॑किरस ज़न मल च़ो॒लुम मनस
अद॒ म्यं॑ लं॑ब॒म ज़नस ज़ान
सुह यं॑लि ड्यूठुम निशि पानस
सोरुय सुय त॒ बो॒ह नो केन्ह

makaris zan mal tsŏlum manas
ada mĕ labam zanas zān
suh yali ḍyūṭhum nishi pānas
soruy suy ta bŏh no keṅh

Impurities of my mind
were wiped away as from a mirror,
and I attained self-knowledge.
I saw him near me—
He is everything,
and I am nothing.

69

लल॒ बो॒ह च़ायस स्वमन॒ बाग॒बरस
वुछुम शिवस शक्थ मीलिथ त॒ वाह
तति लय क॑र॒म अमृतसरस
ज़िंदय मर॑स त॒ म्य॑ करि क्याह

lalla bŏh tsāyas svamana bāgabaras
vuchum śivas śakath mīlith ta vāh
tati lay karam amritsaras
ziṅday maras ta mĕ kari kyāh

I, Lallā, entered the door
to the garden of my mind.
I saw Śiva and Śakti in communion.
I became immersed in the nectar of bliss.
I died while still alive—
nothing worries me.

70

मद प्यो̱म स्यंदि ज़लन यूत
रंगन लीलमि कर्यम क्च़
कंति ख्ययम मन̱शि माम̱सकि नली
स्वय बो̱ह लल̱ त̱ गव म्यं क्याह

mad pyŏm syandi zalan yūt
raṅgan līlami karyam katsa
kati khyĕm manaśi māmasaki nalī
svay bŏh lalla ta gav mĕ kyāh

I drank wine as the water from Sindhu.
How many roles did I play on the world stage?
How many pieces of meat[19] did I eat?
I am still the same Lallā—
nothing happened to me.

---

[19] The third line of the Kashmīrī verse has an archaic expression whose meaning has been lost. Its literal meaning "pieces of human flesh" does not make sense in the context of Lallā's life and verses. Grierson interprets the expression as a metaphor for human experience (p. 97).

71

नियम कर्योथ गर्बा
च़्यतस कर्बा प्यंयी
मरन्‌ ब्रोंठय मरबा
मरिथ त्‌ मरतब्‌ हरिय

niyam karyoth garbā
tsĕtas karbā pyĕy
marana bronṭhay marbā
marith ta martaba hariy

When will you remember
the vow you made in the womb?
Die before your death.
Then at death you will attain a higher state.

72

हा मनशि क्याज़ि छुख वुठान स्यकि लवर
अमि रटि हा मालि पॅकिय ऩ नाव
ल्यूखुय यि नारॉनि कर्मनि रॉखि
ति मालि ह्यकिय ऩ फीरिथ कान्ह

hā manaśi kyāzi chukh vuṭhān sěki lavar
ami raṭi hā māli pakiy na nāv
lyūkhuy yi näräni karmani räkhi
ti māli hěkiy na phīrith kāṅh

O, Fellow Being! Why are you twisting
a rope of sand?
By holding on to this rope,
my dear, the boat will not move.
Whatever god has written in your karma
nobody, my dear, can change.[20]

---

[20] The expression "twisting a rope of sand" refers to futile effort people engage in to achieve self-realization.

73

मनंसय मान बव़् सरस
छ्यूऱ् कूप नेरयस नारुख़् छो़ख
ल्यकां ल्यख युद़् तुला को़टि
तुलि तूल त़् तुल ऩ् केंह

manasay mān bavsaras
chyūr kūpa nerĕs nārukh chŏkh
lĕkä lĕkh yuda tulā kŏṭi
tuli tūl ta tul na keṅh

Consider your mind
an ocean of earthly existence.
If not restrained,
fiery words will burst out in anger.
If weighed on a scale,
these words have no mass.

74

केंह छिय न्यंद्रि हंती वुदी
केंज़न वुद्यन न्यसर प्यंयी
केंह छिय स्नान कंरिथ अपूती
केंह छिय गेह बज़िथ ति अक्रयी

keṅh chiy nyĕndrihatī vudī
keṅtsan vudĕn nĕsar pĕyī
keṅh chiy snān karith apūtī
keṅh chiy geh bazith ti akriyī

Some though asleep are awake,
some while awake have fallen asleep,
some are dirty after a bath,
and some even as householders
are totally detached.

75

ज़ल ज़्यत्ता वो̱न्दस बयि मो बर
चोन ज़िंथ करान पान̱ अनाद
च़्यं को ज़ननि ख्यो̱द हरि कर
कीवल तसुंदुय तारुक नाद

tsal tsĕttā vŏndas bayi mo bar
con tsinth karān pāna anād
tsĕ ko zanani khyŏd hari kar
kīval tasunduy tāruk nād

Fickle Mind,
don't be overcome by fear!
You are cared for
by the beginningless source.
You do not know
when your hunger is satiated.
Meditate only on
the all-permeating unobstructed sound.

76

यव॒ त्‌र च़लि तिम अंबर ह्यता
ख्यो॒द यव॒ गलि तिम आहार अन्न
च़्य॑ंत्ता स्व पर व्य॑ंच़ारस प्यता
च़ेन्तन यि दीह वनकावन

yava tür tsali tim ambar hĕtā
khyŏd yava gali tim āhār ann
tsĕttā sva para vyĕtsāras pĕtā
tsentan yi dīh vankāvan

Wear the clothes
that protect you from cold.
Eat that food
which satisfies your hunger.
Mind, meditate on the Self.
Consider this body to be food
for forest ravens.

77

ख्यन् ख्यन् करान कुन नो वातख
न् ख्यन गछ़ख अहंकारी
सो़मुय ख्यं मालि सो़मुय आसख
समि ख्यन् मुज़र्नय बरंन्यन तारी

khĕna khĕna karān kun no vātakh
na khĕna gatshakh ahaṅkärī
sŏmuy khĕ māli sŏmuy āsakh
sami khĕna mutsaranay barñen tärī

Indulging in eating
will lead you nowhere.
By refraining from eating,
you will become egotistical.
By eating moderately,
you will achieve equanimity.
By practicing moderation,
the closed doors will be unbolted.

78

ख्यथ गण्डिथ शमि न॒ मानस
ब्रांथ यिमव त्रांव तिमय गय खसिथ
शास्त्र बूज़िथ छु यम॒ ब़य क्रूर
सु न॒ पो॒च़्र त॒ दनी लस़िथ

khĕth gaṇḍith shami na mānas
brānth yimav träv timay gay khasith
shāstra būzith chu yama bay krūr
su na pŏtsa ta danī lasith

Tranquility is not achieved
by only eating and clothing oneself.
Those who give up false hopes
attain their goal.
Listening only to scriptures
intensifies the fear of death.
Whoever does not lean on them flourishes.

79

अकुय ओमकार युस नाबि दरे
क्वम्बय ब्रह्माण्डस सुम गरे
अख सुय मन्थर च्यतस करे
तस सास मन्थर क्या करे

akuy oṃkār yus nābi dare
kŏmbay brahmāṇḍas sum gare
akh suy manthr tsĕtas kare
tas sās manthr kyā kare

Whoever holds an Oṃ in the navel,
and through breath control
raises it to *brahmarandhra*—
absorbed in only this mantra,
he has no need for other mantras.

80

ज़ल थम॒वुन हुतवह त्‌रनावुन
ऊर्ध्वगमन॒ पैरिव ज़्रर्यथ
काठ॒देनि द्वद श्रम॒नावुन
अन्तिह सकलु कपठ ज़्रर्यथ

zal thamavun hutvah türnāvun
ūrdvagamana pairiv tsarĕth
kāṭhadeni dvad shramnāvun
antih sakalu kapaṭh tsarĕth

Stopping the rain
and extinguishing the fire,
levitation
and milking a wooden cow—
in the end, all this is deceitful exhibition.

81

कलन काल़् ज़ालि यो़दवय च़्यं गोल
व्यन्दिव गेह व़् व्यन्दिव वनवास
ज़ांनिथ सर्वगथ प्रो़बु अमो़ल
युथुय ज़ानख त्युथुय आस

kalan kāla zäli yŏdvay tsĕ gol
vĕndiv geh va vĕndiv vanvās
zänith sarvagath prŏbu amŏl
yuthuy zānakh tyuthuy ās

As your longings disappear,
whether you are a householder or a recluse,
you realize god as pure and all pervading.
What you perceive is what you will attain.

82

पर तय पान यमि सोम मोन
यमि ह्युह मोन द्यन क्योह राथ
यमिसय अद्वय मन सान्पुन
तमिय ड्ययूठुय सुरग्वरनाथ

par tay pān yĕmi sŏm mon
yĕmi hyuh mon dĕn kyoh rāth
yĕmisay advay man sänpun
tamiy ḍyūṭhuy suragvarnāth

Whoever experiences
the self and the other as equal,
the day and the night as the same,
and whoever frees the mind of duality,
has the vision of the lord of creation.

83

शिव छुय थलि थलि रोज़ान
मो ज़ान ह्योंद त॒ मुसलमान
त्रुक अय छुख त॒ पान पनुन पर्ज़॒नाव
स्वय छै साहिबस सा॑त्य ज़ानी ज़ान

śiva chuy thali thali rozān
mo zān hyŏnd ta musalmān
truk ay chukh ta pān panun parzanāv
svay chay sāhibas sätya zānī zān

Śiva is omnipresent.
Don't differentiate between
Hindus and Muslims.
If you are wise,
you will recognize your true Self—
that is your real acquaintance with the lord.

84

युह यि कर्म करि प्यतुरुन पानस
अर्ज़ुन बर्ज़ुन ब्ययिस क्युत
अन्तिह लागि-रो̠स्त̠ पुशिरुन स्वात्मस
अद̠ यूर्य गछ़̠ त̠ तूर्य छुम ह्यो̠त

yuh yi karm kari pĕtarun pānas
arzun barzun bĕyis kyut
antih lāgi-rŏst puśirun svātmas
ada yūri gatsha ta tūri chum hyŏt

Responsibility for your actions
you must bear—
others share their fruits.
Without attachment,
I offer my actions to the Self.
Wherever I go is all right with me.

85

करम ज़ह कारन त्रेह क्वम्बिथ
यव लबख परलूकस आंख
वो̠थ खस सूर्यमंडल च़्वम्बिथ
तवय च़्नलिय मर̠न̠न्य शांख

karam zah kāran treh kŏmbith
yava labakh paralūkas āṅkh
vŏth khas sūryamaṇḍal tsŏmbith
tavay tsaliy maranañi shāṅkh

Two types of actions
and three are the causes.[21]
Through *kumbhaka,*[22]
you will find the other world.
Arise, ascend
and pierce the sun's disc.
That is how you will lose the fear of death.

---

[21] The causes, leading to limited perception, are the three types of impurities or *malas—āṇavamala, māyīyamala, karmamala.*

[22] *Kumbhaka* is a yogic practice of breath control.

86

यहै मात्रि-रूपि पय दिये
यहै बार्य् रूपि करि विशीश
यहै माय् रूपि अन्ति ज़ुव ह्यंये
शिव छुय क्रूठ त् चेन वोपंदीश

yahai mātri-rūpi pay diye
yahai bārya rūpi kari viśīsh
yahai māya rūpi anti zuv hěye
śiva chuy krūṭh ta tsen vŏpadīsh

As mother she suckles the child.
As wife she performs yet another role.
As *māyā*, she dissolves in the end.[23]
To attain Śiva is difficult –
heed my advice.

---

[23] The word "*māyā*" refers to the material world as an illusion.

87

कुस मरि तय कसू मारन
मरि कुस तय मारन् कस्
युस हर-हर त्रॉविथ गर गर करे
अद़ सु मरि तय मारन तस

kus mari tay kasū māran
mari kus tay māran kas
yus hara hara trävith gara gara kare
ada su mari tay māran tas

Who will die
and who will be killed?
Who will it kill and who will kill it?
Whoever quits chanting "hara,"
and instead recites "gara," "gara"[24]
is the one who dies and the one who is killed.

[24] "Hara" is a term commonly used to refer to God Viśṇu and "gara" means "home" in Kashmīrī. In this verse, chanting "gara" refers to one's preoccupation with worldly affairs.

88

ग्वर शब्दस युस यछ़ पछ़ बरे
ग्याऩ् वगि रटि च़्यत़् त्वर्गस
यन्द्रयै शो़मि़रिथ आनंद करे
अद़् कुस मरि तय मारन कस

gvara shabdas yus yatsh patsh bare
gyāna vagi raṭi tsĕta tŏrgas
yandrai shŏmrith ānand kare
ada kus mari tay māran kas

Whoever trusts the guru's words
seizes the mind-horse
with the reins of knowledge.
Whoever controls the senses,
attains bliss.
Then who will die and who will be killed?

89

ट्योठ मोदुर तय म्यूठ ज़हर
यस युथ छुनुख जतन बाव
यमि यथ करुय कल त कहर
सु तथ शहर वातिथ प्यव

tyŏṭh mŏdur tay myūṭh zahr
yas yuth chunukh jatan bāv
yĕmi yath karuy kal ta kahar
su tath śahar vätith pĕv

Bitter is sweet
and sweet is poisonous.
Effort and single-minded devotion
determine the final achievement.

90

च़ालुन छु वुज़मल॒ त॒ त्रटय
च़ालुन छु मंदिन्यन गटकार
च़ालुन छु पान पनुन कडुन ग्रटय
ह्यॆत॒ मालि सन्तूश वाती पानय

tsālun chu vuzmala ta traṭay
tsālun chu mandiněn gaṭakār
tsālun chu pān panun kaḍun graṭay
hěta māli santūsh vātī pānay

Endure lightning and thunder.
Endure darkness at noon.
Endure passing through the grinding mill.
If you are content, dear,
he will come to you.

91

यंम्य लूब मन्मथ मद च्रूर मोरुन
वत् नाशि मारिथ त् लोगुन दास
तंमिय सहज़् ईश्वर गोरुन
तमिय सोरुय व्योन्दुन स्वास

yĕmi lūb manmath mad tsūr morun
vata nāshi mārith ta logun dās
tamiy sahaz īśvara gorun
tamiy soruy vyŏndun svās

Whoever kills greed, lust, and ego
and then serves people with humility,
yearns for an all pervading god
and perceives everything else as ashes.

92

शिव-शिव करान हम्स्-गथ स्वरिथ
रूज़िथ व्यवंहांरि द्यन क्योह राथ
लागि रोस्त अद्वय युस् मन कंरिथ
तंसि न्यथ प्रसन सुरंग्वरनाथ

śiva śiva karān haṃsa-gath svarith
rūzith vĕvahäri dĕn kyŏha rāth
lāgi-rŏst advya yus man karith
tasi nĕth prasan suragvarnāth

Whoever recites the name of Śiva
and meditates on *haṃsa*,[25]
conducting worldly activities
day and night
and liberating his mind
from desires and duality,
always pleases the lord of creation.

---

[25] *Haṃsa*, a breath control practice, is a basic meditation in the Śaiva tradition.

The wine of Lalla's Verses



93

स॑च़॒सस न॒ सातस पच़॒सस न॒ रुमस
सु मस म्यं॑ ललि च्यव पननुय वाख
अंदरिम गटख रटिथ त॒ वोलुम
च़टिथ त॒ द्युत॒मस त॑तिय चाख

satsasas na sātas patsasas na rumas
su mas mĕ lalli cĕv pananuy vākh
andarim gaṭakh raṭith ta volum
tsaṭith ta dyutmas tatiy cākh

I did not pause for the right moment.
I did not trust anything.
The wine I, Lallā, drank
was my own verses.
I caught the inner darkness,
gathered it
and tore it into shreds.

94

आयस ति स्यो̱दुय त̱ गछ़ ति स्यो̱दुय
स्यंदिस हो̱ल म्यं कर्यम क्याह
बो̱ह तस आंसंस आग̱रय व्यंज़य
व्यंदिस त̱ व्यंदिस कर्यम क्याह

āyas ti syŏduy ta gatsha ti syŏduy
syadis hŏl mĕ karĕm kyāh
bŏh tas äsas āgaray vĕzay
vĕdis ta vĕndis karĕm kyāh

I came here directly
and I will return directly.
What can wickedness do
to my simple and honest nature?
I am known to the beginningless source.
As its acquaintance and loved one,
no harm can come to me.

95

वाख मानस क्वल अक्वल न॒ अते
छ़्वपि मुद्रि अति ना प्रवीश
रोज़ान शिव-शकथ ना अते
म्वतियै कुँह त॒ सुय वो॒पंदीश

vākh mānas kval akval nā ate
tshvapi mudri ati nā pravīsh
rozān śiva śakath nā ate
mŏtiyay kuṅh ta suy vŏpadīsh

Speech or mind and
manifest or transcendent
have no existence there.
Yogic silence has no place there.
Śiva and Śakti don't live there.
Seek whatever is left—
that is my advice.

96

तंथर गलि तय मंथर म्वच़े
मंथर गो़ल तय मोतुय च़्यथ
च़्यथ गो़ल तय केंहति ना कुने
शून्यस शून्याह मीलिथ गौ

tanthr gali tay manthr mŏtse
manthr gŏl tay motuy tsĕth
tsĕth gŏl tay keṅhti nā kune
śūnyas śūnyāh mīlith gav

When teachings disappear,
the mantra remains.
When the mantra disappears,
consciousness remains.
When consciousness disappears,
nothing remains.
Nothingness merges with nothingness.

97

अज़पा गायत्री हम्स̱ हम्स̱ ज़पिथ
अहम् त्रांविथ सुय अद̱ रठ
यंम्य त्रोव अहं सुय रूद पानय
बो̱ह न̱ आसुन छुय वो̱पंदीश

azapā gāyatrī haṃsa haṃsa zapith
ahaṃ trävith suy ada raṭh
yĕmi trov ahaṃ suy rūd pānay
bŏh na āsun chuy vŏpadīsh

Recite *haṃsa* with every breath.
Renounce the self
and meditate on the Self.
Whoever renounces the self,
finds the Self.
Negating the I-ness is my advice.

98

कन्द्यौ गेह त्यज़ि कन्द्यौ वनवास
व्यफो̱ल मन न̱ रटिथ त̱ वास
द्यन राथ गंज़॑रिथ पनुन श्वास
युथुय छुख त̱ त्युथुय आस

kandĕv geh tĕzi kandĕv vanvās
vĕphŏla man na raṭith ta vās
dĕn rāth ganzarith panun shvās
yuthuy chukh ta tyuthuy ās

Some renounce their home,
and some their hermitage.
All is futile
if the mind is not under control.
Meditate on your breath
day and night,
and stay wherever you are.

99

कुश पोश तेल दीफ ज़ल ना गछे़
सद्बाव़ ग्वऱ्-कथ युस मनि ह्यंये
शो़म्बुहस स्वरि न्यथ पनंनी यंछे़
सदा प्यज़े सहज़्-अक्रयी ना ज़्यये

kuś poś tel dīph zal na gatshe
sadbāva gvara-kath yusa mani hěye
śŏmbuhas svari něth pananī yatshe
sadā pěze sahaz-akriy na zyaye

No need for kuś grass, flowers,
sesame seeds, lamp, or water.
Whoever accepts the teacher's words
in simple faith
and remembers Śambhu[26] daily
of his own volition,
absorbed in all-pervasive unobstructed sound,
becomes liberated.

[26] Śambhu is a name for Śiva.

100

कुन्यरै बोज़ख कुनि नो रोज़ख
कुनिरन को̠रनम हंनीयाकार
कुनंय आसिथ द्वन हुन्द जंग गोम
सुय बेरंग गोम करिथ रंग

kunĕray bozakh kuni no rozakh
kuniran kŏrnam hanīyakār
kunay äsith dvan hund jaṅg gom
suy beraṅg gom karith raṅg

When you grasp non-duality,
you lose self-consciousness.
The experience of the unity in duality
has erased my self-consciousness.
Even though it is One,
the conflict from duality persists.
The colorless One
has dyed me in worldly colors.

101

गाल ग॑न्डिन्यम बोल प॑डिन्यम
दपिन्यम तिय यस यिह रो̱च्च़े
सहज़̱ क्वसमौ पूज़ क॑रिन्यम
बो̱ह अम̱लां॑न्य त̱ कस क्याह म्वच्च़े

gāl gaṇḍiněm bol paḍiněm
dapiněm tiy yas yih rǒtse
sahaza kǒsmav pūz kariněm
bǒh amlāñi ta kas kyāh mǒtse

Let them call me names or lecture me.
Let them call me what they wish.
Let them offer me flowers of devotion.
I am untouched—
so who will gain by it?

102

सहज़स शम तॖ दम नो गछ़े
यॆछ़ि नो प्रावख मुक्ति द्वार
सलिलस लवन ज़न मीलिथ गछ़े
तोति छुय द्वर्लब सहॖज़ॖ व्यच़ार

sahazas sham ta dam no gatshe
yatshi no prāvakh mukti dvār
salilas lavan zan mīlith gatshe
toti chuy dvarlab sahaza vyĕtsār

For self-knowledge,
self-restraint and breath control
are not enough.
Liberation is not achieved
through wishing alone.
Though you are completely absorbed in the Self,
like salt dissolved in water,
it is still rare to know the truth about the Self.

103

ग्रट़ छु फेरान ज़ेरे ज़ेरे
ओ़हुकुय ज़ानि ग्रटुक छ़ल
ग्रट़ यलि फेरि तय ज़ांव्युल नेरे
गू वाति पानय ग्रट़बल

graṭa chu pherān zere zere
ŏhukuy zāni graṭuk tshal
graṭa yali pheri tay zävyul nere
gū vāti pānay graṭabal

The grindstone moves
when set in motion.
The axle knows the mystery
of the grindstone.
When the grindstone moves,
fine flour comes out
as the wheat moves by itself
into the grindstone
to be crushed.[27]

---

[27] The working of the grindstone is a metaphor for human existence.

104

ज़ननि ज़ायांय रत्य तय कतिय
करिथ वोदरस बहु कलीश
फीरिथ द्वार बज़नि वांत्य ततिय
शिव छुय क्रूठ तय च़ेन वोपंदीश

zanani zāyäy ratiy tay katiy
karith vŏdaras bahu klīsh
phīrith dvār bazani väti tatiy
śiva chuy krūṭh tay tsen vŏpadīsh

We are born
to the mother healthy and fit
after causing much suffering
when inside the womb.
Then we return and wait for the same door.
Attaining Śiva is difficult—
heed this advice.

105

अछ़यन आय त॒ गछ़ुन गछ़े
पकुन गछ़े द्यन क्योह राथ
योरय आय त॒ तूर्य गछ़ुन गछ़े
केंह नत॒ केंह नत॒ केंह नत॒ क्याह

atshĕn āya ta gatshun gatshe
pakun gatshe dĕn kyoh rāth
yoray āya ta tūri gatshun gatshe
keṅh nata keṅh nata keṅh nata kyāh

Birth and death
occur continually
as day and night
come and go.
From where we came,
we must return.
There is something to it.

106

त्रयि न्यंगि सराह संर्य सरस
अकि न्यंगि सरस अर्शस जाय
हऱ्म्वख़् कौंसऱ् अख सुम सरस
सति न्यंगि सरस शून्याकार

trĕyi nĕngi sarāh sari saras
aki nĕngi saras arśas jāy
harmŏkha kauṅsara akh sum saras
sati nĕngi saras śūnyākār

Three times I saw
the lake overflowing.
Once I saw
a place to step on to the sky.
Once I saw a bridge
from Harmukh to Kaunsar.
Seven times I saw
the manifest world vanish into the void.

107

सम्सारस आयस तपसी
बोद प्रकाश लो॒बुम सहज़
मरयम न॒ कान्ह त॒ मर॒ न॒ कंसि
मर॒ नेछ त॒ लस॒ नेछ

samsāras āyas tapasī
boda prakāśa lŏbum sahaz
marĕm na kāṅh ta mara na kaṅsi
mara nech ta lasa nech

I came to this world a hermit.
Through meditation on the Self,
I attained the light of knowledge.
No one will die for me,
and I will die for nobody.
Life and death are the same.

108

यथ सरस सिरिफो़ल ऩ व्यच़ी
तथ सरि सकलंय पोञ च्यंन
मृग सृगाल गण्डि ज़लहस्ती
ज़्यन ऩ ज़्यन त़ तो़तुय प्यंन

yath saras siriphŏl na vĕtsī
tath sari sakalay poñ cĕn
mrag sragāl gaṇḍi zalhastī
zĕn na zĕn ta tŏtuy pĕn

All drink from the lake
that can't hold
a grain of mustard.
Deer, jackal,
rhinoceros, and hippopotamus
arise from it
and fall into it.[28]

---

[28] The lake is a metaphor for the universal consciousness, which is the source of the manifest world. Seen from the perspective of the universal consciousness, the manifest world is just an instant flash that comes into existence and vanishes away.

109

लोलुक नार ललि ल्वलि ललनोवुम
मरनय म्वयस त॒ रूज़स न॒ ज़रै
रंगरछ़ि ज़ातसइ क्याह न॒ रंग होवुम
बो॒ह दपुन च़ंलुम क्याह सना करै

loluk nār lalli lŏlli lalanovum
maranay mŏyas ta rūzas na zarai
raṅgaratshi zātsay kyāh na raṅg hovum
bŏh dapun tsalum kyāh sanā karay

I, Lallā, suffered the fire of love.
Before death,
I died without a ṭrace.
Born without color or creed,
what colors didn't I assume?
'I-ness' left me—
What else could I do?

Words of Wisdom



110

रावन् मंज़य रावुन रोवुम
रांविथ अथि आयस बवसरै
असान गिन्दान सहज़्इ प्रोवुम
दपनुय कोरुम पानस सरै

rāvana manzay rāvun rovum
rävith athi āyas bavasarai
asān gindān sahaziy provum
dapanuy korum pānas sarai

In the midst of being lost,
I lost the sense of being lost.
After being lost,
I found myself in the worldly ocean.
Laughing and playing,
I attained the all-pervading Self—
this philosophy became a part of me.

111

दीव़ वटा दीवर वटा
प्यठ़ ब्वऩ छुय यीक़वाठ
पूज़ कस करख हूट़ बटा
कर मनस त़ पवनस संगाठ

dīva vaṭā dīvar vaṭā
pĕṭha bŏna chuy yīkavāṭh
pūz kas karakh hūṭa baṭā
kar manas ta pavanas sangāṭh

The idol is stone,
and the temple is stone—
all one from top to bottom
Who will you worship, learned Paṅḍit?
Learn to control your mind and your breath.[29]

---

[29] All stones come from the same earthly source irrespective of the function they serve. Similarly humans, Lallā says, come from the same source even though they belong to different castes, creeds, and classes.

112

कव़् छुख दिवान अनिने बछ़्
त्रुक अय छुक त़् अंदऱ्य अछ़
शिव छुय अंति तय कुन मो गछ़
सहज़ कथि म्यानि करतो पछ़

kava chukh divān anine batsh
truk ay chuk ta andaray atsh
śiva chuy äti tay kun mo gatsh
sahaza kathi myāni karto patsh

Why are you groping like the blind?
If wise, you will turn your attention within.
Śiva is there.
No need to go anywhere else—
believe my simple words.

113

तल् छुय ज़्युस तय प्यठ् छुख नच़ान
वनत् मालि मन क्यथ् पच़ान छुय
सोरुय सो्म्बरिथ यति छुय म्वच़ान
वनत् मालि अन्न क्यथ् रो्च़ान छुय

tal chuy zyus tay pyeṭha chukh natsān
vanta māli man kĕtha patsān chuy
soruy sŏmbrith yati chuy mŏtsān
vanta māli ann kĕtha rŏtsān chuy

Below you a pit
and above it you are dancing.
Tell me, my dear, how you can depend on it?
Everything you gather
is left behind.
Tell me, my dear,
how can you enjoy your meal?

114

क्याह बो॒डुख मूह बव॒संदरि दारे
सो॒थ लूरिथ प्यंयिय तम पांख
यम॒ बठ कर॒नय कांल्य छोर॒दारे
कव॒ ज़न कासिय मर॒न॒न्य शांख

kyāh bŏḍukh mūha bavasadri dāre
sŏth lūrith pĕyiy tam pāṅkh
yĕma baṭh karnay käli choradāre
kava zana kāsiy marnañi shāṅkh

Why are you immersed
in the sea of illusory pleasures?
Having destroyed the high banked road,
you are stuck in the mire.
At the appointed time,
death will take you.
Who will relieve you
of your fear of death?

115

मुडस ग्यान्च कथ नो वंनिज़े
खरस गोर दिन् राविय दोह
स्यकि शाठस ब्योल नो वविज़े
रावरिज़ि न् कोम याज्यन तील

muḍas gyānac kath no vanize
kharas gor dina rāviy doh
sĕki shāṭhas byol no vavize
rāvrizi na kŏm yājĕn tīl

Don't talk to a fool about knowledge.
Giving molasses to a donkey
is a waste of time.
Don't plant seeds
in the sandy riverbank.
Don't waste oil on bran cakes.

116

प्रथ्य तीर्थन गछ़ान सन्यास
गारान स्वदर्शन म्यूल
च़्यत्ता परिथ मो न्यशपथ आस
डेशख दूरे द्रमुन न्यूल

prathay tīrthan gatshān sannyās
gārān svadarśan myūl
tsětta parith mo něshpath ās
ḍeśakh dūre dramun nyūl

A sanyasi goes to holy places
seeking self-knowledge.
Mind, in spite of learning,
don't be directionless—
from the distance, grass looks greener.

117

अव्यच़ा॑र्य पोथ्यन छिहो मालि परान
यिथ॒ तोत॒ परान राम पंज॒रस
गीता परान त॒ हीथा लबान
पर॑म गीता त॒ परान छ्यस

avĕtsäri pothĕn chiho māli parān
yitha tota parān rāma panjaras
gītā parān ta hīthā labān
param gītā ta parān chĕs

Those without discernment, my dear,
read religious books
as parrots recite "Rāma" in a cage.
Reading the Gītā becomes an excuse—
I have read the Gītā
and I am still reading it.


A K
R A
M
A R
R

118

त्रेशि ब्वछि मो क्रेशिनावुन
यानि छययि तानि संदारुन दिह
प्रट चोन दारुन त् पारुन
कर वोपकारुन स्वय छय क्रिय

treśi bŏchi mo kreśināvun
yāni tshĕy tāni sandārun dih
phraṭ con dārun ta pārun
kar vŏpkārun svay chay kriy

Don't torture your body
with thirst and starvation.
When the body is exhausted,
take care of it.
Cursed be your fasts
and religious ceremonies.
Be good to others—
that is the real religious practice.

119

पवन पूरिथ युस अनि वगि
तस ब्वना स्पर्शि न् ब्वछि त् त्रेश
ति यस करुन अन्तिह तगि
संसारस सुय ज़्यंयी नेछ

pavan pūrith yusa ani vagi
tasbŏna sparśi na bŏchi ta treś
ti yas karun antih tagi
samsāras suy zĕyī nech

Whoever controls the inhaled breath,
hunger and thirst do not touch him.
Whoever does this until the end
is born fortunate in the world.

120

राजस बांजि यम्य करतल त्यांजि
स्वर्गस बांजि छुय तफ तय दान
सहज़स बांजि यम्य ग्वर्-कथ पांजि
पाप्-प्वण्य् बांजि छुय पनुनुय पान

rajas bäji yěmi kartal tyäji
svargas bäji chuy taph tay dān
sahazas bäji yěmi gvara-kath päji
pāpa pŏñi bäji chuy panunuy pān

Whoever is a skilled swordsman
acquires a kingdom.
Whoever engages in penance and charity
goes to heaven.
Whoever follows the guru's words
gains self-knowledge.
He himself reaps the fruit of his good and bad deeds.

121

मिथ्या कपठ असथ त्रोवुम
मनस कोरुम सुय वो̲पदीश
ज़नस अंदर कीवल ज़ोनुम
अनस ख्यनस कुस छुम दूश

mithyā kapaṭh asath trovum
manas korum suy vŏpadīsh
zanas andar kīval zonum
anas khĕnas kus chum düsh

I renounced
falsehood, deceit, and hypocrisy.
I told my mind to follow this teaching.
Only One I found in everyone—
what is wrong with eating with anyone?

122

ज़ानह॒ नाडिदल मन॒ र॑टिथ
च़॑टिथ व॑टिथ कुटिथ कलीश
ज़ानह॒ अद॒ अस्त॒ रसायन ग॑टिथ
शिव छुय क्रूठ त॒ च़ेन वो॒प॑दीश

zānaha nāḍidal man raṭith
tsaṭith vaṭith kuṭith klīsh
zānaha ada asta rasāyan gaṭith
śiva chuy krūṭh ta tsen vŏpadīsh

Had I known how to control
the inner channels—
how to cut them from desires
and how to guide them
to end my suffering—
then I would have made the elixir.
Śiva is difficult to attain, heed that advice.

123

कुस पुश त् क्वस् पुशांञी
कम कुसुम लांगिज़्यस पूज़े
कमि गो्ड दिज़्यस ज़ल्दांनी
कव् सन् मंथर् शंकर स्वात्म् वुज़े

kus puś ta kŏssa puśäñī
kam kusum lägizĕs pūze
kami gŏḍ dizĕs zaldäni
kava sana manthr śaṅkara svātma vuze

Who is the male florist and the female?
Which flowers should be offered for worship?
Which water should be used for anointing?
Which mantra will awaken the Śaṅkara within?

124

मन पुश तय यछ पुशांञी
बावंकि कुसुम लांगिज़्यस पूज़े
शशिरस गो̮ड दिज़्यस ज़ल̮दांनी
छ़्वपि मंथर̮ शंकर स्वात्म वुज़े

man puś tay yatsh pushäñi
bāvaki kusum lägizĕs pūze
shashiras gŏḍ dizĕs zaldäni
tshŏpi manthr śaṅkara svātma vuze

Mind is the male
and desire the female florist.
Offer the flowers of devotion in worship.
Anoint with the eternal nectar
dripping from the moon.
Silent recitation will awaken
the Śaṅkara within.

125

लूब मारुन सहज़ व्यच़ारुन
द्रोग ज़ानुन कल्पन त्राव
निशि छुय त॒ दूर मो गारुन
शून्यस शून्याह मीलिथ गव

lūb mārun sahaz vĕtsārun
drog zānun kalpan trāv
nishi chuy ta dūra mo gārun
śūnyas śūnyāh mīlith gav

Abandon desires
and meditate on the Self.
Realization is hard to achieve.
Stop daydreaming.
That is near you,
so don't search afar.
Nothingness merges with nothingness.

126

यो॒सय शेल पीठस त॒ पटस
सो॒य शेल छय प्रथिवुन॒ दीश
सो॒य शेल शूबव॒निस ग्रटस
शिव छुय क्रूठ त॒ च़ेन वो॒पंदीश

yŏsay shel pīṭhas ta paṭas
sŏy shel chay prathivun dīsh
sŏy shel shūbavanis graṭas
śiva chuy krūṭh ta tsen vŏpadīsh

The stone on the pedestal
and the pavement
is the same stone that comes from the earth.
The same stone adorns the grindstone.
To attain Śiva is hard—
heed my advice.

127

ज़र्मन ज़टिथ दितिथ पंनि पानस
त्युथ क्या व्वयोथ त फलिहि सोव
मूडस वोपंदीश गय रींज़ि दुमटस
कनि दान्दस गोर आपरिथ रोव

tsarman tsaṭith ditith pani pānas
tyuth kyā vŏyoth ta phalihi sov
mūḍas vŏpadīsh gay rīnzi dumaṭas
kani dāṅdas gor āparith rov

On removing the skin,
you stretched it with pegs around yourself.
What did you sow
to have produced this fruit?
Giving advice to a fool
is like throwing pebbles at a dome
or milking a brown bull
after feeding it molasses.[30]

---

[30] Lallā expresses in this verse the futility of teaching spiritual discipline to people who are immersed in the material world. Such people reduce themselves to their bodies (hide), stretching it and anchoring it in the material world through pegs of desire.

128

रव मत् थलि थलि तापितन
तापितन वोत्तम वोत्तम दीश
वरुन मत् लूक् गर् अंत्रितन
शिव छुय क्रूठ तय त्रेन वोपदीश

rav mata thali thali täpitan
täpitan vŏttam vŏttam dīsh
varuṇa mata lūka gara ätsitan
śiva chuy krūṭh tay tsen vŏpadīsh

Doesn't the sun shine everywhere
instead of shining only on good places?
Doesn't Varuṇa[31]
enter every house?
Attaining Śiva is difficult—
heed this advice.[32]

---

[31] Varuṇa is an important Vedic God associated with rain, rivers, and oceans.

[32] Lallā assures people of different castes, classes, and creeds that they are equally capable of acquiring self-knowledge since Śiva permeates both the inner and outer reality.

129

अथ मबा त्रावुन खर बा
लूक हन्ज़ क्वंग वा'र ख्यियि
तति कुस बा दारीय थरबा
यति नॅनिस कर्तल प्यॅयियि

atha maba trāvun khar bā
lūka hanz kŏng vär khĕyiy
tati kus bā dārīy thar bā
yati nanis kartal pĕyiy

Don't let your donkey loose.
It will graze
on other people's saffron fields.
Who but you will have
to bare your back there
to take sword strikes
when discovered.[33]

[33] The "donkey" in the verse refers to the mind. If the mind is not under control, it will engage in misdeeds for which the owner must suffer punishment. This verse says metaphorically that one must bear the fruits of one's actions.

130

मूडो क्रय छय न̱ दारुन त̱ पारुन
मूडो क्रय छय न̱ र॑छिनि काय
मूडो क्रय छय न̱ दिह सन्दारुन
सहज़ व्य॑च़ारुन छुय वो̱प॑दीश

mūḍo kriy chay na dārun ta pārun
mūḍo kriy chay na rachini kāy
mūḍo kriy chay na dih sandārun
sahaz vĕtsārun chuy vŏpadīsh

Fool, the right action is not
fasting and perfoming rituals.
Fool, the right action is not
protecting your body.
Fool, the right action is not
maintaining your body.
Meditation on the Self is my advice.

131

ग्यानमार्ग छय हाक वार
दिज़्यस शम-दम क्रिय पोञ
लामाच़क्र पोश प्रानि-क्रयि दार
ख्यन ख्यन म्वच़िय वारय छ्यन्य

gyāna mārg chay hāka vär
dizĕs sham dam kriyi poñ
lāmātsakra posh prāni kriyi där
khĕna khĕna mŏtsiy väray chĕn

The path of wisdom
is like a kitchen garden.
Nurture it with
self-restraint, tranquility, and good deeds.
Fruits of old deeds must be paid off
like the animal offered to the goddess.
Eating continuously from the garden
will clear it of the fruits of past deeds.

132

लज़ कासिय शीत न्यवारिय
तृन ज़ल करान आहार
यि कंम्य वो॒पंदीश को॒रुय हूट॒ बटा
अज़्नीतन वटस सज़्नीतन कठ द्युन आहार

laz kāsiy shīt nĕvariy
trina zala karān āhār
yi kami vŏpadīsh kŏruy hūṭa baṭā
atsītan vaṭas satsītan kaṭh dyun āhār

It covers your body
and protects you from cold.
It lives on grass and water.
Who gave you the advice, foolish Paṇḍit,
to offer a living sheep
to a lifeless stone?

133

ह्यथ करिथ राज्य फेरिना
दिथ करिथ त्रप्ति न् मन
लूब व्यना ज़ीव मरिना
ज़ीवन्त् मरि तय सुय छुय ग्यान

hĕth karith rāji pherina
dith karith träpti na man
lūba vĕna zīv marina
zīvanta mari tai suy chuy gyān

Acquiring a kingdom
will not make you content.
Renouncing it
will not satisfy your mind.
Free from desires,
you will not die.
Self-knowledge is to be dead
to worldly things while still alive.

134

मारुख मार्बूथ काम-क्रूद-लूब
नत् कान बंरिथ मारनय पान
मनय ख्यन दिख स्वव्यच़ार् शम
विशय तिहुंद क्याह-क्युथ दो्र ज़ान

mārukh mārabūth kām krūd lūb
nata kān barith mārnai pān
manay khĕn dikh svavĕtsāra sham
viśay tihund kyāh kyuth dŏr zān

Kill your mortal enemies—
lust, anger, and desire.
Otherwise they would kill you with their arrows.
Calm them with self-restraint and good thoughts.
Recognize their nature and their power.

135

मूड ज़ांनिथ पशिथ त़ कोर
को़ल श्रुत़वोन ज़डरूपि आस
युस यी दपिय तस तीय बोल
योहय तत्व व्यंदिस छुह अब्यास

mūd zänith paśith ta kor
köl shrutavon zaḍa rūpi ās
yus yī dapiy tas tīya bol
yohay tattva vĕdis chuh abyās

Act ignorant, even if you know.
Act blind, even if you see.
Act dumb, even if you hear.
In short, act detached.
Whatever people tell you,
listen and agree.
This practice will lead to knowledge.

136

वो॒थ रांन्या अर्च्चुन सखर
अथि अल पल वखुर ह्यथ
योदवनय ज़ानख परम॒पद अखयर
हिशिय खो॒श ख्वर क्यथ ख्यथ

vŏth ränyā artsun sakhar
athi alpal vakhur hĕth
yodavanay zānakh paramapad akhĕr
hishiy khŏśa khŏr kĕtha khĕth

Arise, Lady! Prepare for worship
with wine, meat, and a dainty choice of food.
If you know the supreme state,
breaking customs will make no difference.

137

दछिनिस ओ̱बरस ज़ायुन ज़ानंह̱
समुद्रस ज़ानंह̱ कंडिथ अठ
मन्दिस रूगियस वैद्युत ज़ानंह̱
मूडस ज़ांनिम न̱ पृणित कथ

dachinis ŏbras zāyun zānaha
samudras zānaha kaḍith aṭh
mandis rūgiyas vaidyut zānaha
mūdas zänim na priñit kath

I may know how to
scatter southern clouds,
dry up an ocean,
or cure a chronically sick person,
but I never knew how to convince a fool.

138

मा॑रिथ पांछ़ बूथ तिम फलहंडी
ज़ीतन दाऩ त़ वखुर ख्यथ
तदै ज़ानख परम़पद च़ंडी
हिशी खो़श ख्वर कोति ऩ ख्यथ

mārith pāñtsh būth tim phalhandī
tsītana dāna ta vakhur khĕth
taday zānakh paramapad tsaṇḍi
hishi khŏśa khŏr koti na khĕth

Kill the five elements of experience[34]
on a diet of meditation
and realize the supreme state—
breaking customs
makes no difference.

[34] The five elements of experience (*pañca-mahābhūtas*) of the physical world are solidity, aeriality, vacuity, liquidity, and formativity.

139

कन्द्यो करख कन्दि कन्दे
कन्द्यो करख कन्दि विलास
बूग़य मीठि दितिथ यथ कन्दे
अथ कन्दि रोज़ि सूर ऩ त़ सास

kandyo karakh kandi kande
kandyo karakh kandi vilās
būgay mīthi ditith yath kande
ath kandi rozi sūr na ta sās

Hey, you, preoccupied with your body.
Hey, you, busy adorning your body
and using it for sweet pleasures—
not even dust and ashes will remain of this body.

140

स्वमन् गारुन मंज़ यथ कन्दे
यथ कन्दि दपान स्वरूप नाव
लूब मूह च़लिय शूब यियि कन्दे
यथि कन्दि तीज़ तय सोर प्रकाश

svamana gārun manz yath kande
yath kandi dapān svarūp nāv
lūb mūh tsaliy shūb yiyi kande
yathi kandi tīz tay sor prakāśa

Seek the Self in the body.
This body is known as the abode of the Self.
Forsaking greed and attachment
will brighten the body.
The body will shine like the sun.

141

च़्यथ अमर्‌पथि थांविज़ि
ति त्रांविथ लगिय ज़ूरे
तति च़़ नो शीक्यज़ि संदांरज़ि
द्वद्शुर त़ क्वछ नो मूरे

tsĕth amarapathi thävizi
ti trävith lagiy zūre
tati tsa no śikizi sandärizi
dvadashur ta kŏcha no mūre

Focus your attention on the immortal path.
If the mind strays from the path,
it will be lost.
Don't be afraid there—
be calm.
A suckling baby is quiet in the lap.

142

त्ज़ामर छत्र रथ सिंहासन
ह्लाद ना'टिरस तूल-परयाँख
क्याह मा'निथ यं'ति स्थिर आसवुन
कव ज़न का'सिय मरनन्य शांख

tsāmar chathr ratha simhāsan
hlād nāṭiras tūla paryāṅkh
kyāh mänith yěti sthir āsavun
kavzana kāsiy maranañi shāṅkh

A fly-whisk, a sunshade,
a chariot, and a throne.
Merry making, pleasures of theater,
or a soft bed—
which of these will endure here?
How can they relieve you
of the fear of death?

143

राज़् हंस आंसिथ सपदुख कोलय
कुस्ताम त्सोलुय क्याहताम ह्यथ
ग्रट् गव बंद तय ग्रटन ह्योत गोलुय
ग्रटवोल त्सोलुय फल् फोल ह्यथ

rāza hams äsith sapadukh kölay
kustām tsoluy kyāhtām hĕth
graṭa gav band tay graṭan hyot gŏluy
graṭavol tsoluy phal phol hĕth

Even though a royal swan,
you have become mute.
Someone has run away with something.
As soon as the mill stopped,
the grain channel got choked.
The miller ran away with the grain.[35]

[35] The word *haṃsa* refers to the basic meditation in the Śaiva tradition involving breath control, and, literally, it refers to the bird "swan," often associated with beauty. This verse is a metaphor for spiritual experience.

144

असि प्वन्दि ज़्वसि ज़ामि
न्यथय स्नान करि तीर्थन
वह्र्य वांहरस नोनुय आसि
निशि छुय त परज़ानतन

asi pŏndi zvasi zāmi
nĕthay snān kari tīrthan
vahari väharas nŏnuy āsi
nishi chuy ta parzāntan

Laughing, sneezing, coughing, and yawning,
bathing daily at holy places,
revealed throughout the year—
That is near you,
so recognize it.

145

शिव छुय ज़ांव्युल ज़ाल वहरांविथ
क्रंज़न मंज़ छुय तरिथ क्यथ
ज़िंद नय वुछ़हन अद् कति मरिथ
पान मंज़ पान कड व्यच़ांरिथ क्यथ

śiva chuy zävyul zāl vaharävith
kranzan manz chuy tarith kyath
zinda nay vuchahan ada kati marith
pāna manz pān kad vĕtsärith kyath

Śiva is like a fine net spread everywhere,
subtly permeating the physical world.
If you don't see him while alive,
how can you do so when dead?
Through self-introspection,
remove the self from within yourself.

146

रंगस मंज़ छुय ब्योन् ब्योन् लबुन
सोरुय ज़्रालख बरख स्वख
ज़्रख रंश त् वैर गालख
अद् डेशख शिव सुंद म्वख

raṅgas manz chuy byŏn byŏn labun
soruy tsālakh barakh svakh
tsakh raśa ta vair gālakh
ada ḍeshakh śiva sund mŏkh

The world is full of differences.
If you are tolerant,
you will be happy.
If you renounce anger, hate, and animosity,
you will see Śiva's face.

Appendix



Lallā and the Kashmīrī Śaiva Tradition

Lallā's verses tell the story of her spiritual journey as a Śaiva mystic. Her interest in the Kashmīrī Śaiva practice was deepened due to her disenchantment with the conditions of her material existence. Siddha Śrīkaṇṭha initiates her into Śaiva yoga and she strives to establish her own inner connection with the tradition based on her experience. As she advances in her practice, she is said to have surpassed even her teacher.

For a context for understanding Lallā's verses, I provide here a brief overview of the Kashmīrī Śaiva tradition.[1] Kashmīrī Śaivites view the ultimate reality as pure consciousness. Various terms, vibration (*spanda*), Self-awareness (*vimarśa*), and power (*bala*) are used to describe the activity of the universal consciousness, which is pure light (*prakāśa),* independent and unconditioned. The *prakāśa-vimarśamaya* nature of the universal consciousness makes it creative, dynamic, and active as it manifests itself in the diversity of the world.

The expansion of the universal consciousness results in the unfolding (*unmeṣa*) of the phenomenal world, and its contraction or infolding (*nimeṣa*) leads to the withdrawal of diversity into the unity of its original state. The metaphor of ocean and waves is used to describe the activity of the

---

[1] Kashmīrī Śaiva literature can be divided into three categories: a. *Āgama Śāstra* which includes among others tantras like the *Mālanīvijaya, Svacchanda, Vijñānabhairava, Mṛgendra, Rudryāmala, Netra,* and the *Śiva Sūtra* with its various commentaries b. *Spanda Śāstra* includes the *Spandakārikā* with various commentaries c. *Pratyabhijñā śāstra* includes Somānanda's *Śivadṛṣṭi,* Utpaladevā's *Īśvarapratyabhijñā,* Kshemarāja's *Pratyabhijñāhṛdaya,* and Abhinavagupta's *Tantrāloka* and *Tantrasāra* (Chatterji 128-169).

universal consciousness—the ocean symboilizes the universal or Śiva consciousness and the waves the diversity of the phenomenal reality. Just as waves emerge from the vastness of the ocean, so it is with the individual consciousness emerging from the Śiva consciousness, which is the essential ground of both the manifest and the unmanifest reality.

The activity of consciousness gives rise to three different states: deep sleep, dreaming, and waking. Deep sleep represents the state of unity in which the universal and the individual consciousness coincide. The awareness of this unity in deep sleep is merely unconscious, but if conscious awareness of this unity exists, then it is called the "fourth state" which is achieved through introspective contemplation. The dream state represents the sphere of inner speech, populated by thoughts and images that do not arise from direct interaction with the outer world as in the waking state. The dream state is thus unique to each individual as it is a part of his or her subjective awareness. In the waking state, as opposed to the dream state, the objective sphere predominates and it is characterized by a sharp distinction between the subject and the world of objects familiar to all.

Since the universal consciousness is the substratum of the diverse phenomenal world, starting from humans at the top of the evolutionary ladder down to the simplest non-living matter, liberation lies in realizing one's own nature (*svasvabhāva*), which is pure consciousness.

The *Spandakārikā,*[2] a poetic and semi-philosophical text, summarizes the teachings contained in the *Śiva Sūtra*. Utpaladeva's *Īśvarapratyabhijñā*, on the other hand, is a

---

[2] The *Spandakārikā* consist of fifty-three verses. Its authorship is disputed. Some claim that this text was composed by Vasugupta or revealed to him, while others insist that it is the work of his student Kallaṭa.

systematization of *pratyabhijñā* philosophy.[3] According to the *pratyabhijñā* philosophy the universal consciousness is the source of creation, persistence, and withdrawal of the universe. Comparing the *pratyabhijñā* and *spanda* perspectives, Dyczkowski writes "while the *Pratyabhijñā* stresses transcendence without ignoring or minimizing immanence, *Spanda* stresses immanence grounded in transcendence" (*The Stanzas* 193). This distinction is important to remember as we explore Lallā's thought since she shows a leaning toward the *pratyabhijñā* perspective and seems to emphasize transcendence, but unlike it, ignores the significance of immanence. This attitude is also reflected in her austere lifestyle and her approach to her bodily needs. The body is only important as long as it serves as a means to bring her the experience of transcendence.

The *Spandakārikā* describe three types of impurities (*āṇavamala, māyīyamala, and karmamala*), which lead to limited vision and thus prevent the individual from realizing her own nature. The *āṇavamala* is the metaphysical ignorance that makes the individual experience herself as limited. The *māyīyamala* makes the limited individual forget her essential nature. The *karmamala* leads to the performance of both good and bad deeds that leave impressions, which further bind the individual to the material world. The

[3] The first philosophic treatise on Kashmīr Śaivism, *Śivadṛṣṭi*, was composed by Somānanda toward the end of the eighth century. His disciple Utpaladeva wrote *Īśvarapratyabhijñā*, the source text for *pratyabhijñā* philosophy that was developed in Kashmīr between the middle of the 9th and the 11th centuries. Both Abhinvavgupta (10th century) and Kṣemarāja (11th century) wrote commentaries on *Īśvarapratyabhijñā*. Kashmīrī Śaiva philosophy reached its pinnacle in the hands of Abhinavagupta who brought about a syncretism of different Śaiva schools in his voluminous *Tantrāloka*, a summarization of the *Tantrāloka* in *Tantrasāra*, a commentary on the *Parātrīṃśikā* and several other works. His work developed Trika Śaivism into an all encompassing system, which is considered to be synonymous with Kashmīrī Śaivism.

unenlightened remain unaware of their own nature, and hence, are bound by the limited vision of the empirical consciousness that confines them to the world of thoughts and ideas related to the objects of the world of senses.

The three powers associated with Śiva are: action (*kriyāśakti),* will *(icchāśakti),* and knowledge *(jñānaśakti).* The power to act (*kriyāśakti*) thus lies in the *spandāśakti* of Śiva, which is one's own essential nature. The *Śiva Sūtras* elaborate on the means of liberation and divide them into three categories: *śāmbhavopāya, śāktopāya,* and *āṇavopāya.* In the *śāmbhavopāya* the experience of self-realization occurs as a sudden flash of intuition revealing one's own nature as the source of both the outer world of diversity and the inner world of thoughts and speech. The *śāktopāya,* also called *jñānayoga,* involves focused examination of the nature of self. It is comprised of two types of practices—contemplation on the five-fold activity of Śiva (creation, persistence, destruction, concealment, and grace) and purification of one's thought constructs. By watching the rise and fall of thoughts in a state of passive alertness, the individual experiences one's grounding in the universal consciousness. Finally, the *āṇavopāya* involves focusing attention on one's body, breath, ritual, mantra, and so on. Eventually, all these practices lead to the realization that phenomenal reality emerges out of the ceaseless activity of the universal consciousness.

Lallā's approach to her practice can be classified under the *āṇavopāya.* She begins as a limited individual (*aṇu*) deeply attached to sense objects. In this state, she strongly identifies with her ego-consciousness. Some of Lallā's verses deal with the early stages of her practice when she feels overwhelmed by the conditions of her material existence. She searches for means to overcome her limited vision that binds her to the material reality. According to the *Śiva Sūtras* the individual consciousness is imprisoned in the world created out of thought constructs. The self gets attached to

these constructs and on becoming attached, it is affected by states of pleasure and pain that leave behind impressions, thus further binding the self to the world that appears divided and separate. In the early stages of her quest, Lallā strives for detachment and equanimity in the face of ridicule she suffers from members of her community as she sets out on her own path. Thus, she says:

Both good and bad, I must endure.
My ears don't hear,
and my eyes don't see.
When the inner Self
awakens in my heart,
the lamp will shine
even in the midst of a tornado. (V 9)

The first step toward self-knowledge, then, involves getting rid of the ego consciousness or I-ness and opening up to the Śiva consciousness. Also, focusing on the transitoriness of material things can be used as an aid to turning one's attention away from sense objects. Whereas in the *bhakti* tradition external deity and objects of worship are used to gain spiritual experience, in the Śaiva tradition external objects of worship are replaced by sustained contemplation on the Self. Since the attention constantly slips out of five sense organs, extreme will power must be cultivated to proceed with the practice. Lallā says:

What will I do
with the five, the ten, and the eleven?
They have all emptied out the cauldron.
If all had come together
and pulled the rope,
the eleven would not have lost the cow. (V 16)

The "five" in the above verse are the five principles (*pañca-mahābhūtas*) of experience of the physical world (solidity, aeriality, vacuity, liquidity, and formativity), the "ten" are the five organs of sense perception (*jñānendriyas*)

and the five of action (karmendriyas) and the "eleven" refer to these ten with the mind (manas) arising from ego consciousness (ahaṃkāra). Lallā comments here about the necessity of emptying of the body, depicted as a cauldron, as sense organs, along with organs of action, as well as the mind, continually disperse one's attention. Consequently, the experience of Śiva consciousness, represented by the "cow," is lost. If all are brought under control, self-knowledge can be achieved.

Many of Lallā's verses deal specifically with the use of breathing exercises to achieve a state of inner focus when the activities of the body, mind and senses are brought to rest. Controlling the mind and the senses is done through the mastery of breathing. A few of Lallā's verses deal with the actual practice in the Kashmīrī Śaiva tradition that involves controlling the prāṇaśakti or vital breath:

> After wandering in ten directions,
> I found the true path.
> Through breath control,
> I penetrated the void—
> Śiva I saw permeating all.
> Shutting the six and the three,
> I found Śiva the root cause of all. (V 33)

This method of meditation involves focusing within, watching the inhalation (apāna) and exhalation (prāṇa) which is combined with the cessation of all thoughts. The "six" in this verse refer to the five organs of senses and the mind and the "three" refer to three body openings—all these are brought to rest through introspection. The Vijñāna-bhairava gives innumerable techniques for this purpose. And one of them is haṃsah, which involves meditation on the middle space between the in-breath and out-breath. Fixing one's attention on the space between two thoughts is yet another extension of this practice. Instead of moving from thought to thought, the practitioner focuses on the space between two thoughts to experience the ground

from which all thoughts arise. Through constant absorption in *haṃsah*, the Self or Śiva is experienced as the essential nature of both the outer world of diversity and the inner world of the contemplating self.

> Recite *haṃsa* with every breath.
> Renounce the self
> and meditate on the Self.
> Whoever renounces the self,
> finds the Self.
> Negating the I-ness is my advice. (V 97)

Lallā also refers to yet another practice that deals with one's absorption in the sound of Oṃ.[4] Lillian Silburn writes that Lallā's references to Oṃ can actually be traced to a practice given in the *Svacchandatantra*, which describes the ascent of the vital breath through the psychic centers of the body while Oṃ is sounded. The three syllables of the sounding of Oṃ, A, U, and M, are associated with psychic centers located in the heart, throat, and the vault of the palate respectively.[5] Regarding this practice, Lallā says:

While tracing the history of Oṃ in India, Mark Dyczkowski writes that in Vedic times Oṃ was recited in the beginning of the Vedic hymns and regarded as the male seed that fertilized the female hymn. In Upaniṣidic times, the three syllables of the sound Oṃ, AUM, came to symbolize three states of consciousness—waking, dreaming, and deep sleep. In the tantric literature, this symbolism is extended even further in that the resonance at the end of the sounded AUM itself is seen to incorporate subtler levels of awareness which are divided into different phases: the half moon (*ardhacandra*), the point (*bindu*), the limit (*nirodhikā*), the sound (*nāda*), the unstruck sound (*nādānta*), the energy (*śakti*), the pervasive (*vyāpinī*), the equal one (*samāna*) and the transmental (*unmanā*) (*The Stanzas* 252).

[5] The awakening of *kuṇḍalinī* and experiencing its ascent up the spine to the *sahasrāra* constitutes the fundamental practice of Kashmīrī Śaivism. See Silburn.

Doors and windows of my body I closed.
The prāna-thief I caught
and brought under control.
I tied it inside the chamber of my heart.
I whipped it with the syllable Oṃ. (V 27)

The three syllables AUM are also associated with three states of consciousness—waking, dreaming, and deep sleep and the three deities, Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Rudra (a form of Śiva). Lallā's verses do not give actual techniques, but rather use metaphorical language to convey her own experiences of higher states of awareness, which cannot be contained in the reality assigned to the deities Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Śiva —the creator, the preserver and destroyer of the universe, according to Hindu mythological literature. Thus, Lallā says:

Śiva is the horse,
Keśava is the saddle
and Brahmā is on the stirrups.
A yogi through yogic practice
recognizes the One
riding the horse. (V 56)

The unstruck sound of Oṃ,
all permeating,
whose abode is void,
without name,
colour, caste or form.
Self-introspection reveals
the unsounded resonance.
That is the deity riding the horse. (V 57)

Lallā's mastery of various breathing practices is indicated by the legend that describes her teacher's amazement at the intensity of her austerity during the forty-day fast of *candrāvana*. On the full moon day, she enters a clean room, stands in an earthen pot and covers her head with another such pot. As the moon wanes, her body diminishes in size, until on the fifteenth day the two pots, the top and the bottom,

join each other. Śrīkaṇṭha, her teacher, lifts the lid and sees trembling quicksilver inside. As the moon waxes, Lallā's body begins to increase in size until on the full-moon day she regains her old size. He is impressed by her performance and says that the disciple has overtaken the teacher (*gav tsāth gvaras kha'sith*) (Koul 1921, 312).

The above legend symbolically represents the essence of Kashmīrī Śaiva teachings. The recurrent cosmic cycles, the rising and setting of the sun and the moon, are self-perpetuating processes that are integrally related to the individual perception of these processes. The rising and falling of cosmic cycles as well as individual moments of cognition and perception represent the expansion (*unmeṣa*) and contraction (*nimeṣa*) of consciousness. The five-fold functions of Śiva (creativity, persistence, withdrawal, grace, and obscuration) are repeated in a limited way at the individual level as one engages in activities of cognition and perception. On the individual level, however, the powers of universal consciousness become a means of bondage. As Kashmīrī Śaiva texts point out, it is the obscuration power of Śiva that leads to the diversity of the world. Those who get entangled in this diversity without discovering its grounding in universal consciousness remain ignorant about the continuity between the subjective reality of the inner world and the objective reality of the outer world.

Whereas the first three functions of Śiva, creativity, persistence, and withdrawal, occur at both cosmic and individual level, the last two, grace and obscuration, are intimately tied to the individual striving to realize one's own nature (*svasvabhāva*). On the individual level, the moment of creation arises out of mental perceptions as one's attention is focused on inner objects of thought or external objects of perception. The enjoyment of the object of attention is the moment of persistence. And as the objective sphere is absorbed in pure consciousness and it lies there as if in a potential form, it is the moment of withdrawal. The objects of mental perception and cognition, if not withdrawn

completely into consciousness, leave behind impressions, resulting in concealment or obscuration of the true nature of reality. In this state, the objective reality is experienced as separate and disconnected from oneself. The moment of grace (*anugraha*) is marked by the realization that underlying both the subjective and the objective sphere is the universal consciousness that is one's own nature.

In the above legend, the transformation of Lallā's body into a ball of vibrating quicksilver symbolically represents her introspective state as she experiences expansion of her consciousness. Lallā's body does not dissolve into the blankness of nothingness, but is turned into vibrant quicksilver, a metaphor for the higher state of consciousness, also called the fourth state. The image presents the immanence and transcendence in tension, leading to the experience of the third space, which goes beyond the binary dualism. In this state, the distinction between the subject and the object disappears and the empirical consciousness transcends the objective reality.

Transgressing the distinctions between the inside and outside or the subject and object leads to the opening up of an entirely new space that refuses to be contained in any dualistic conceptual frameworks. The most profound of Lallā's verses, then, try to represent just such an experience which is unrepresentable since it goes beyond all thought constructs, dualities, names and attributes.

Speech or mind and
manifest or transcendent
have no existence there.
Yogic silence has no place there.
Śiva and Śakti don't live there.
Seek whatever is left—
that is my advice. (V 95)

Even as Lallā's verses make references to Śiva as a male deity, the underlying current of her experiences is best represented by those verses that portray Śiva as the

transcendental reality which is beyond any anthropomorphic representation, a reality that goes beyond subject-object duality since it is the essential ground of both.

The difficult task that Lallā faces is how to represent this reality using language that always objectifies what it represents. Also, any attempt to describe the metaphysical reality that exists outside the linguistic and epistemological structures of a culture is already influenced by the thought structures and language of the culture that attempts to describe it. Finally, she describes this state by simply saying what it is not. Lallā speaks about this final state in terms of nothingness coming in touch with nothingness.

Neither you nor I
and neither meditation
nor the object of meditation exist.
The All-doer forgets Himself.
The blind find this meaningless.
The wise become one
with this supreme state. (V 61)

In yet another formulation of this concept, Lallā describes the sun as illuminating the world of objects. The setting of the sun, then, represents an introspective state when the individual withdraws attention from the objective sphere and rests in the subjective sphere. This state is compared to the shining of the moon. As the moon vanishes or as the practitioner goes beyond the subjective sphere, he experiences *śūnya* or nothingness.

The sun sets,
the moon shines.
The moon vanishes,
consciousness remains.
Consciousness disappears,
nothingness remains—
the physical, spiritual, and metaphysical
merge into nothingness. (V 31)

The sun and the moon in this verse refer to the practice that involves the control of vital breath and its ascent through the psychic centers. The setting of the sun and the moon represents two currents, *prāṇa* (*sūrya* or sun) and *apāna* (*candra* or moon) that join in the middle channel (*suṣumnā*), as the vital breath ascends upwards and develops into the concentrated point and on to the half moon, then breaking through the limit (*nirodhikā*), and on to yet subtler levels of awareness where the universal subjectivity predominates. In the *Spandakārikās,* similar verses appear:

> Once entered that state which (the yogi) takes as his support and firmly resolves that: 'I will surely do whatever He [Śiva] says,' both the sun and moon set, following the ascending way, into the channel of suṣumnā, once abandoned the sphere of the universe ... Then in that great sky, when the sun and moon dissolve away, the dull minded (yogi is cast down) into a state like that of deep sleep. The awakened however remains lucid [V 23, 24, 25]. (*The Stanzas* xvi)

As the individual reaches higher states of awareness, Lallā says, it is possible to let go of this subjective sphere and experience a state when all dualities are transcended so that the physical, spiritual, and the metaphysical all come together in the experience of the new state.

Lallā also occasionally describes the process of realizing the highest state in terms of crossing six forests or six paths and seizing the seventh. The "six paths" refers to six cakras or energy centers along the spine— *mūlādhāra, svādhiṣthāna, maṇipura, anāhata, viśuddhā, ājñā.* The orb of the moon is the seventh cakra or *brahmarandhra.* The references once again are to the practices mentioned above and the ultimate goal is always to realize the state of nothingness or non-being, which Lallā refers to as "the abode of light."

After traversing six forests,
I awakened the orb of the moon.

By controlling my breath,
I gave up attachment to worldly things.
I roasted my heart
in the fire of love—
I found Śaṅkara that way. (V 67)

I became absorbed in the sacred syllable Oṃ.
I burned myself like coal.
Leaving behind six paths,
I seized the seventh—
and then, I, Lallā, reached the abode of light. (V 28)

The *Svacchandatantra* discusses the development of the syllable Oṃ in terms of crossing seven voids, the first six of which are unstable because of vibration and hence, must be transcended in order to arrive at the seventh which, free of all states, is the highest void and represents "non-being." Thus, "Non-being is beyond contemplation, and its domain is beyond the universe; free of the mind, intellect and the rest, it is devoid of reason and doctrine. It is the imperishable Lord, beyond perception and the other means of knowledge, beyond all reason and authority, free of bondage and Mantra, omniscient, omnipresent, tranquil, pure, and free of limitations."[6] Lallā refers to the experience of "non-being" (*abhāva*) as nothingness (*śūnya*) in her verses not in negative or nihilistic terms, but more to represent a space that cannot be contained in any dualistic categories. Lallā's verses reflect her quest for transcendence. Her choice of images and metaphors, therefore, more often than not point toward creating disenchantment with worldly things. Her journey is a one-way journey to cross the river of life to reach the other shore. Even though Lallā embodies the state of detachment from the world and hence, possesses the ability to experience it in its fullness, yet there is a deliberate attempt on her part to stay locked out of any aesthetic experience of

[6] From the *Svacchandabhairavatantra*. Quoted in *The Stanzas* 211.

the world. The aesthetic delight that Abhinavagupta[7] writes about in his work on poetry and drama is not available to Lallā as she has turned away from the world. Her verses are the only means through which she can manifest her joy and creativity.

I did not pause for the right moment.
I did not trust anything.
The wine I, Lallā, drank
was my own verses.
I caught the inner darkness,
gathered it
and tore it into shreds. (V 93)

Her most profound verses then reflect her desire to lose herself in mystical experience rather than to use it as the ground to lead a more fulfilling material existence. Thus, she says,

Impurities of my mind
were wiped away as from a mirror,
and I attained self-knowledge.
I saw Him near me—
He is everything,
and I am nothing. (V 68)

---

[7] Abhinavagupta (10th century AD), a philosopher, literary critic, and a great Shaivite teacher wrote extensively on the role of poetry and drama to experience the bliss of the Self during moments of intense emotional experiences when thought processes come to a complete halt. Abhinava wrote two influential commentaries, the *Dhvanyālokalocana* on the *Dhvanyāloka* of Ānandavardhana (9th century literary critic and poet), and the *Abhinavabhārati* which explicates the *Nāṭyaśāstra,* a work on dramaturgy by Bharata (500 AD). In the *Abhinavabhārati* while eulogizing poets, Abhinavagupta compares the poet to the creator itself, because "the poet is endowed with a power to create wondrous and unheard of things. This power arises from the grace of *Parā Vāk* ("Highest Speech") which is just another name for poetic imagination (*pratibhā*) which has its seat in the poet's own heart, and which is eternally in creative motion (*udita*)" (quoted in Masson 13).

Lallā justifies her renunciation of the world by describing it as an illusion, which is surprising considering the fact that she is a Śaiva practitioner. Kashmīrī Śaivites explicitly reject the position taken by nondualist Vedāntins that the world is an illusion or *māyā*. Nondualist Vedāntins believe that there is only one reality, which is transcendental and inactive Brahman. Once ignorance is removed, the world appears as what it actually is—Brahman. For example, in darkness it is easy to mistake a rope for a snake, but once light shines on the rope, the illusion is dispelled. Kashmīrī Śaivites, on the other hand, believe all manifest reality is real because it represents the unfolding of consciousness. The unfolding gives rise to diversity and infolding to withdrawal into the unity where the universe is held in a potential form. There are not two different moments or two different orders of reality here, but one moment with two aspects where one has the other implicit in it. Through the cultivation of the self as the Self, one realizes that the universal consciousness constitutes the ground of the three states of consciousness, deep sleep, dreaming, and waking, even as it abides in the fourth that transcends the three states. Śiva and Śakti, transcendence and immanence, represent two aspects of the same reality held together in a delicate balance, as each separately is only an incomplete description of reality.

Lallā comments upon the dynamism between Śiva and Śakti in terms of the interplay between the self (the finite consciousness) and Śiva or the Self (the universal consciousness). The realization of the Self within oneself, *ātmavyāpti,* and the realization of the Self as the substratum of the outside world, *śivavyāpti,* is the ultimate goal of her practice. The enlightened perspective reveals to her that the empirical and the universal, as well as the manifest and the unmanifest, are interwoven. The manifest world arises out of the womb of the unmanifest like waves arise from the ocean.

The efficacy of the notion of unity in duality or on a broader scale unity in multiplicity is closely related to what

perspective is used to describe the two aspects of reality that are interwoven. The traditional interpretation of Śaivism has been to regard liberation as the realization of an eternal state that is changeless and timeless Absolute—the state of Śiva consciousness. The aim of liberation, then, is to attain to this state in order to escape from the ravages of time. For example, the commentators of the *spanda* doctrine admit that the ultimate consciousness and its vibration belong to one moment rather than two different moments of reality, even as they insist that ultimately Śiva is the eternal agent of the cosmic process as well as individual experience. Dyczkowski, however, writes that the original doctrine of *spanda* did not make finer distinctions in its description of the ultimate reality. In the *Spandakārikās*, in fact, there is no contradiction seen in describing Śiva as both transcendent and immanent in all states of consciousness and yet, whose highest state of awareness transcends all states. According to the *Spandakārikās,* Śiva

> is transcendentally immanent, with the stress being on His immanence as the experiencing subject (*bhoktṛ*) who, divested of all egoity, is not the individual soul (*puruṣa*) nor the individual perceiver (*grāhaka*) but his own personal fundamental state (*svasthiti*) or being (*svasvabhāva*). Engaged in the act of perception, he is also the pure agency (*kartṛtā*) which, although omniscient and omnipotent, is not centered on individual objects of perception or products of action, but is the universal underlying ground (*adhiṣṭhātṛ*) and activity (*sāmānyaspanda*)....Self realization is the astonishing insight into one's own fundamental state of being as Śiva in both domains of subjectivity and objectivity. (Dyczkowski *The Stanzas* 186)

The original *spanda* doctrine thus represents the middle ground between the Śiva-oriented *pratyabhijñā* philosophy and the Śakti-oriented *krama* system of Kashmīrī Śaivism. The most empowering interpretation of Śaivism would be

to define liberation in terms of a process where self-realization is neither to be lost in the transcendent and restful Śiva nor to find oneself limited to the domain of Śakti.

Perhaps we can understand this concept better if we refer to recent discoveries in quantum mechanics, which cannot be explained on the basis of categories of human understanding and normal sense perceptions. At the quantum level the subatomic particles appear as both waves and particles. If instruments were used to describe their position, they would register as particles, and if their momentum was measured, they would appear as waves. Each by itself is thus an incomplete description of the subatomic reality. Both the wave and particle descriptions are needed to give the complete picture. More fundamentally, reality is potential. By exercising awareness in different ways, the many possibilities are reduced to specific actuality.

The evolution of phenomenal reality is contingent on the ground-stuff of consciousness. The well-known quantum physicist David Bohm proposes a theory of reality based on his synthesis of insights into quantum reality with Eastern philosophical ideas. Bohm theorizes that there is an implicate order enfolded in the entire universe, and at that level everything is interconnected and a part of the whole. Becoming and not being is the basis of reality. A Śaivite would say reality is the play of consciousness, and a physicist metaphysician might say reality is process—a flow of processes that are novel, creative, and evolving. Everything is part of the flux of this everchanging reality.

Both the Self and the self are intricately intertwined. No eternity exists apart from temporal existence—one is enfolded in the other and does not exist apart from the other. Śiva and Śakti are two aspects of the same indeterminate reality so that one can say that reality is both Śiva and Śakti. "The motion of absolute consciousness is a creative movement, a transition from the uncreated state of Being to the created state of Becoming. In this sense Being is in a state of perpetual Becoming ...it constantly phenomenalises

into finite expression" (Dyczkowski 1987, 77).

Kashmīrī Śaivites describe the Self or Śiva as a painter who paints on the screen of his own consciousness or as an artist who brings forth the world for his own delight. The world is the result of the tāṇḍava dance of Śiva through which he expresses his pure joy and freedom. Since Śiva or the Self underlies both the self and the world, the ultimate aim of the individual is to become aware of one's true nature (*svasvabhāva*). To experience the world as the aesthetic expression of Śiva is compared in the Śaiva texts to the experience of an artwork. The highest art is not a realistic representation of the external world, but the expression of joy and freedom of the Self. Abhinavagupta says that for a reader or a spectator of an artistic work, "the enjoyment of an aesthetic experience consists of a transcendental wonder (*alaukikacamatkāra*) and is decidedly (*eva*) different from ordinary (*laukika*) knowledge such as (is produced) by memory and inference."[8] The poet uses creative imagination (*pratibhā*) to express the greatest freedom and joy of creation. Great poetry invokes in the reader feelings of awe and wonder, filling him with amazement (*camatkāra*). During such an experience the distance between the subject and object disappears. Time and space dissolve. The transcendence of the empirical ego leads to self-forgetfulness and total immersion in the moment.[9] Just as it is in the experience of art and poetry, so it can be in the experience

[8] Abhinavagupta in the *Abhinavabhārati*. Quoted in Masson 48.

[9] In Towards a *Psychology of Being*, Abraham Maslow uses similar terminology to describe peak experiences, which are intense experience of creative, mystical, philosophical, and emotional nature. Peak experiences are the experiences of highest happiness and fulfillment. In this state perception transcends the ego and one experiences wonder, amazement, humility and even reverence. Maslow's description of peak experiences very well illustrates the Śaiva belief that intense experience of emotions, mystical or creative in nature, lead to the transcendence of the empirical ego and the experience of our Śiva nature.

of the world as the creative play of consciousness.

The need to play is intrinsic to reality—the play here means nature's tendency to create meaningful order out of diverse phenomena marked by creativity and novelty. Liberation, then, is the realization that the true nature of reality is becoming. The description of reality as the tāṇḍava dance of Śiva illustrates the process of becoming and hints at its creative and aesthetic elements. The *Śiva Sūtras* say: "The Self is the actor or the dancer (*nartaka ātmā*)" (*Aphorisms* 105). A good actor is sensitive to the emotive states (*rasa*) of the play and identifies completely with the part she plays and yet in between the scenes, she reverts back to her own self and rejoices in the play of creation. Similarly, the Self within the self acts out its world drama through the activity of the senses, taking delight in its unfolding in the diversity of the manifest reality. According to the *Spandakārikās* "the realization of the liberated condition is the achievement of a state of pure enjoying subjectivity (*bhoktṛtā*), through which perfect mastery of every power is acquired...The liberated yogi thus conforms to Śiva's state which, beyond the opposites of subject and object, pleasure and pain, is the subject who enjoys the cosmic sport of the cycle of His universal manifestation" (Dyczkowski, *The Stanzas* 186).

To say that Lallā actually read these texts would be to plunge into ahistoricism and deny her the specificity of the historical moment she occupies. Her worldview is very much shaped by the ideology of the medieval period. In spite of remarkable insights into the nature of reality she attains through her Śaivite practice, she can only experience these insights in a disembodied fashion, without integrating them into her lived reality. This in fact limits her potential to lead a fulfilling life at the physical level, even as she achieves an advanced state of awareness at the spiritual level.

In another work, *To the Other Shore: Lalla's Life and Poetry*, I argue that Lallā's asceticism was due to her location as a woman practitioner within the Kashmīrī Śaiva tradition. This location placed her spiritual attainment in a

contradictory position to the traditional role of a woman and a wife in which self-effacement and subservience were promoted rather than self-mastery. Lallā's verses repeatedly point to the futility of observing religious practices that include asceticism and renunciation. In one of her verses, she says that even householders can achieve self-realization if they work hard at it. Her own life, however, contradicts the message in her teachings. Even as at one level, there is a need to transcend dualism, at another level her words are marked by the dualism of mind and body.

To bring out the relevance of Lallā's poetry for contemporary society, it is important to emphasize that the Kaśmīrī Śaivism which permeates her verses does not promote renunciation of the world. The *Spandakārikās* describe the relationship of the Self and the world as that between the mirror and its reflection. The reflection is not something separate from the mirror, just as the created world is not separate from the Self. However, unlike the reflection, which is of an object outside the mirror, there is nothing outside the consciousness that gets reflected. This is an important distinction, which illustrates that the relationship between the consciousness and the empirical world is not based on positing the world as the other, outside of itself, and thereby assigning it a different order of reality. Instead, the empirical world exists within the mirror of consciousness and hence, the two are integrally related. The world is not a negative image of the Self. In order to experience the Self, one need not negate the world since it is an expression of the Self. Once the enlightened perspective is achieved, the world can be enjoyed as the creative manifestation of the universal consciousness.

In Lallā's verses, in spite of their Śaiva content, there is an undue stress on the mirror part of the above metaphor, and it is a mirror that does not reflect the world. The light of consciousness that illumines her inner reality bounces off the social structures of her material reality. Lallā's dancing is not the dancing of Śiva taking delight in his creation. Her

life experiences in fact deconstruct the metaphor of dance—she symbolically divests herself of the body that would enable her to enjoy the dance. For her, the world is indeed *māyā,* which hinders rather than helps her enjoy her insights into reality.

(Adapted from Chapters 4 & 5 of Jaishree Kak Odin's *To the Other Shore: Lalla's Life and Poetry*, Vitasta Pub, 1999.)

Concordance of Various Lallā Collections

Kak	Grierson	A. Koul	Koshur Samāchār	J. Kaul/ Kotru	Parimoo
1	98		2	5	16
2	106		1	1	4
3		13 (1930)	6	14	15
4	41		10	8	19
5	67		5	2	14
6	108		3	23	24
7		12 (1930)	4	4	17
8		13 (1932)	54k	43	
9		13 (1932)	54 kh	42	23
10	83		87	9	2
11	18		57	39	6
12	8		46	73	12
13	102		115 k	105	
14	103		115kh	105	
15	7		75	129	20
16	95		8	6	60
17	13		114	128	21
18		12 (1932)	81	75	
19	105		82	88	35
20		11 (1932)	56		
21		15 (1933)	63	25	11
22		5 (1931)	13	24	26
23	48		34	74	32
24	109		131	127	64
25	56			95	67
26	57		141	96	68
27	101		20		31
28	82		127	94	53

Kak	Grierson	A. Koul	Koshur Samāchār	J. Kaul/ Kotru	Parimoo
29	69		21	91	42
30		1 (1931)	122		
31	9		107	85	45
32	44		132	136	50
33		9 (1930)	116	125	98
34		24 (1932)	31	126	
35		19 (1932)	118	103	100
36	42		125	70	57
37		10 (1931)	29	87	
38		16 (1932)	53	47	92
39	93		133	137	101
40	96		85	10	
41	3		36	97	
42		17 (1932)	52	46	90
43	58		134	138	
44	49		35	86	37
45		12 (1933)	112	131	
46	4		27	98	33
47	76		129	102	97
48	6		79	118	52
49		25 (1930)	48	44	
50	94		14	21	27
51		3 (1930)		116	
52	97		86	11	
53	33		124	71	54
54	78		95	119	69
55	79		96	120	70
56	14		97	121	65
57	15		98	122	66
58		20 (1932)	25	63	34
59	26		23	52	30
60	1		108	133	39
61	59		110	135	47
62	22			117	49

Kak	Grierson	A. Koul	Koshur Samāchār	J. Kaul/ Kotru	Parimoo
63	16		111	83	48
64	24		68	64	
65	60		37	99	46
66	84				18
67	25		83	93	38
68	31		130	100	51
69	68		121	130	44
70	81			115	
71	87			17	
72	107		16	15	
73	23			41	
74	32		91	111	87
75	72		40	29	22
76	28		60	33	81
77		7 (1931)	64	27	80
78	27		65	30	
79	34		26	72	28
80	38		69	112	88A
81	64		78	109	77
82	5		74	132	74
83		21 (1932)	105	57	
84	61		12	49	85
85	75			101	96
86	54		101		
87		17 (1930)	67k	54	
88		17 (1930)	67kh	55	
89		27 (1932)	30	20	
90		11 (1933)	28	28	5
91	43		70	36	83
92	65		76	110	75
93	104			92	
94		5 (1930)	120	26	3
95	2		109	134	40
96	11		106	89	41

Kak	Grierson	A. Koul	Koshur Samāchār	J. Kaul/ Kotru	Parimoo
97		6 (1930)	135		73
98	55		77	108	76
99	45		43	67	56
100		16 (1930)	113	123	
101	21		55	38	7
102	29		38	76	36
103		10 (1930)	92	56	
104	51		99	77	
105	19		11	7	78
106	50		94	114	58
107	35		123	104	
108	47		93	113	59
109		20 (1930)	80		
110		20 (1930)	80		
111	17		41	66	55
112		3 (1933)	32	50	
113		23 (1932)	7	3	
114	74			13	95
115		32 (1930)	157-158	18	9
116	36		45	107	62
117		4 (1930)	51	45	91
118		10 (1933)	62	34	
119	37		22	51	84
120	62		15	22	25
121		14 (1932)	119	58	
122	80		24	80	29
123	39		42k	68	71
124	40		42kh	69	72
125	30		73	90	43
126	52		100	78	
127	66		50	16	
128	53		102	79	
129	88		33	35	
130		23 (1930)	39	59	

Kak	Grierson	A. Koul	Koshur Samāchār	J. Kaul/ Kotru	Parimoo
131	63		17	62	63
132		19 (1930)	44	65	93
133	12		66	48	86
134	71		71	37	82
135	20		58	40	10
136	10		154	61	13
137		7 (1930)	156	19	
138	77			60	
139		6 (1931)	59	31	
140		6 (1931)	59	32	
141	70			53	79
142	73			12	94
143	86			106	
144	46		104	84	61
145		31 (1930)	103	82	
146		28 (1930)	72	124	

Bibliography

Translations and Commentaries of Lallā's Verses

Kaul, Jayalal. *Lal Ded.* New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1973.

Koshur Samāchār: A Socio-Cultural Monthly. Lalded Number. Vol. IX, No.1 (Jan.-Feb. 1971), pp. 1-58.

Koul, Pandit Ananda. "Life Sketch of Laleshwari" and " Lallā-Vākyāni." *The Indian Antiquary.* Vols. L (1921), pp. 309-12; LIX (1930), pp. 108-30; LX (1931), pp. 191-93; LXI (1932), pp. 13-16; LXII (1933), pp.108-11.

Lal Ded: Her Life and Sayings. Trans., Nil Kanth Kotru. Srinagar: Utpal Publications, 1989.

Lallā-Vākyāni: or The Wise Sayings of Lal Ded. Ed. and trans., Sir George Grierson and Lionell D. Barnett. London: Royal Asiatic Society, 1920.

Lalleśvari: Lallayogeśvari kī vānī. Trans., Svāmī Muktānand Paramahaṃsa. Ganeśpurī, Mahārāśtra: Srī Gurudeva Ashrama, 1972.

Naked Song. Trans., Coleman Barks. Athens, GA: Maypole Pub, 1992.

Odin, Jaishree Kak. *To the Other Shore: Lalla's Life and Poetry.* New Delhi: Vitasta, 1999.

Parimoo, B.N. *The Ascent of Self.* 2nd edn. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1987.

Temple, Richard Carnac. *The Religion and Teachings of Lalla.* New Delhi: Vintage Books, 1990.

The Wise Sayings of Laleshwari. Trans., S.N. Charagi. Srinagar: Trust Publishing House, 1938.

Related Works on Aesthetics, Poetry, Philosophy, Religion, and History

The Aphorisms of Śiva with a Commentary by Bhāskaracārya, the Vārttika. Trans., Mark S. G. Dyczkowski. Varanasi, India: Dilip Kumar Publishers, 1991.

Bailly, Constantina R. *Shaiva Devotional Songs of Kashmir: A Translation and Study of Utpaladeva's Shivastotravali.* Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1987.

Bamzai, Prithivi N. K. *A History of Kashmir.* Delhi: Metropolitan Book Co, 1962.

Bazaz, P.N. *Daughters of the Vitasta.*New Delhi: Pamposh Publications, 1959.

Bhagavad Gītā. Trans. Sri Swami Śivānanda. Durban: Śivānanda Press, 1983.

Bohm, David. *Wholeness and the Implicate Order.* London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1980.

Chatterji, J. C. *Kashmir Shaivism.* Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1982.

Dhar, Triloki Nath. *Rūpa Bhawāni: Life, Teachings, and Philosophy.* Srinagar: Valley Printing Press, 1977.

The Dhvanyāloka of Ānandavardhana. With the *Locana* of Abhinavagupta. Trans., Daniel H. H. Ingalls, Jeffrey M. Masson and M.V. Patwardhan. Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1990.

Dhvanyāloka of Ānandavardhana. Ed. And Trans., K. Krishnamoorthy. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1974.

Drabu, Vishva Nath. *Śaivāgamas.* New Delhi: Indus Publishing Company, 1990.

Ä Dyczkowski, Mark S. G. *The Doctrine of Vibration: An Analysis of the Doctrines and Practices of Kashmir Shaivism.* New York: SUNY press, 1987.

Flood, Gavin. *Body and Cosmology in Kashmir Śaivism.* San Francisco: Mellon Research University Press, 1993.

Gnoli, Raniero. *The Aesthetic Experience According to Abhinavagupta.* Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series, 1985.

Hasan, Mohibbul. *Kashmir under the Sultans.* Calcutta, India: Iran Society, 1959.

Hughes, John. *Self Realization in Kashmir Shaivism: The Oral Teachings of Swami Lakshmanjoo.* New York: SUNY Press, 1995.

Jonarāja. *Rājataraṅgiṇī of Jonarāja.* Trans., Jogesh Chunder Dutt. Delhi: Gian Publishing House, 1986.

Kachru, Braj B. *Kashmiri Literature.* Wiesbaden: Otto Harrassowitz, 1981.

Kak, Ram Nath. *Autumn Leaves.* New Delhi: Vitasta Publications, 1996.

Kak, Subhash C. "On the Science of Consciousness in Ancient India." *Indian Journal of History of Science,* 32 (2), 1997.

Kalahana. *Rājataraṅgiṇī.* Trans., R.S. Pandit. New Delhi: Sahitya Akademi, 1990.

Kalhana. *Rājataraṅgiṇī.* Trans. M.A. Stein. Vols I & II. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1961.

Knowles, James Hinton. *A Dictionary of Kashmiri Proverbs & Sayings.* Reprint of 1885 edn. New Delhi : Asian Educational Services, 1985.

Kramrisch, Stella. *The Presence of Śiva.* Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1981.

Kṣemarāja. "The Essence of Vibration, the SpandaSamdoha" in *The Stanzas on Vibration: The Spandakārikās with Four Commentaries.* Trans., Mark S. G. Dyczkowski. New York: SUNY Press, 1992. Pp. 61-72.

Kumar, Pushpendra. *Śakti Cult in Ancient India.* Varanasi: Bhartiya Publishing House, 1974.

Lakshman Jee, Swami. *Kashmir Shaivism: The Secret Supreme.* New York: SUNY Press,1988.

Lakshman Jee, Swami. *Shiva Sutras: The Supreme Awakening.* Ed. John Hughes. USA: Authorhouse, 2002.

Madan, T.N. *Family and Kinship: A Study of the Pandits of Rural Kashmir.* Delhi: Oxford University Press, 1989.

Maslow, Abraham H. *Toward a Psychology of Being.* Princeton, N.J.: Van Nostrand, 1968.

Masson, J.L. and M.V. Patwardhan. *Śāntarasa and Abhinavagupta's Philosophy of Aesthetics.* Reprint of 1969 edition. Poona: Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, 1985.

Mishra, Kamalkar. *Kashmir Śaivism: The Central Philosophy of Tantrism.* Rudra Press: Cambridge, Ma, 1993.

Muktananda, Swami. *Nothing Exists That Is Not Shiva: Commentaries on the Shiva Sutra, Vijñāna Bhairava, Guru Gita and Other Sacred Texts.* Siddha Yoga Publications, 1997.

Muktananda, Swami. *Play of Consciousness.* San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1978.

Muller-Ortega, Paul Eduardo. *The Triadic Heart of Śiva.* Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 1989.

O'Flaherty, Wendy Doniger. *Asceticism and Eroticism in the Mythology of Śiva.* London: Oxford University Press, 1973.

Pandey, K. C. *Comparative Aesthetics.* Vol. I. Varanasi: Chowkhamba Sanskrit Series Office, 1959.

Pandit, B. N. *Aspects of Kashmir Śaivism.* Srinagar: Utpal Publication. 1977.

Pandit, B. N. *History of Kashmir Śaivism.* Srinagar: Utpal Publication, 1990.

Pratyabhijñānhṛdyam: The Secret of Self Recognition. Trans., Jaideva Singh. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1979.

Rafiqi, Abdul Qaiyum. *Sufism in Kashmir.* Varanasi, Delhi, India: Bharatiya Publishing House, 1972.

Rastogi, Navjivan. *The Krama Tantricism of Kashmir.* Vol. I. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1979.

Ramanujan, A. K. *Speaking of Shiva.* Maryland, U.S.A.: Penguin, 1973.

Ray, S. C. *Early History and Culture in Kashmir.* Delhi, India: Motilal Banarsidass, 1969.

Sangari, Kumkum. "Mirabai and the Spiritual Economy of *Bhakti" Economic and Political Weekly*. July 7, 1990.

Silburn, Lilian. *Kuṇḍalinī: The Energy of the Depths*. Trans. Jacques Gontier. New York: State University of New York, 1988.

Sastri, P.S. *Indian Theory of Aesthetics*. Delhi: Bharariya Vidya Prakashan, 1989.

Shrīvara's *Jainarājataraṅgiṇī* in *Medieval Kashmir*. Ed. S. L. Sadhu. Reprint of the J. C. Dutta's translation of *Rājtaraṅgiṇīs* of Jonarāja, Shrīvara and Shuka (published in 1898 AD under the title *Kings of Kashmira* Vol III). New Delhi, India: Atlantic Publishers, 1993.

The Śiva Purāna. Vols. 1-4. Ed., J. L. Shastri. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1995.

Śiva Sūtras: The Yoga of Supreme Identity. Trans., Jaideva Singh. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1979.

Spanda Kārikās. Trans. Jaideva Singh. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1980.

The Stanzas on Vibration: The Spandakārikās with Four Commentaries. Trans, Mark S. G. Dyczkowski. New York: SUNY Press, 1992.

Sūfī, G.M.D. *Kashīr: A History of Kashmir*. Vols. 1 & 2. New Delhi: Light and Life Publishers, 1974.

Swamy, H. Thipperudra. *The Viraśaiva Saints: A Study*. Trans. S. M. Angadi. Mysore, India: Rao and Raghavan, 1968.

Vijñānabhairava or Divine Consciousness. Trans. Jaideva Singh. Delhi: Motilal Banarsidass, 1979.

Walimbe, Y.S. *Abhinavagupta on Indian Aesthetics*. Delhi: Ajanta Publications, 1980.

Woodroffe, John. *Śakti and Śākta*. Madras: Ganesh and Company, 1987.

Index

Of Related Interest:

THE YOGA OF KASHMIR SHAIVISM

Consciousness is Everything

SWAMI SHANKARANANDA

Consciousness is the most intimate experience of life, the essence of life itself. Among the many spiritual traditions born and developed in India, one ancient philosophy—Kashmir Shaivism—has explored it completely. Until now, Kashmir Shaivism was an esoteric field accessible only to a few scholars and other specialists. Here, for the first time, Swami Shankarananda, a Self-realised spiritual master, presents the wisdom of this powerful tradition in a form that will delight and inspire all spiritual seekers. He explores the teachings in rich detail, elucidating ideas and meditative practices while drawing upon a vast canvas of many great beings, wisdom traditions and personal experience. The Yoga of Kashmir Shaivism is a book that will transform you. It is a resource and guide towards investigating and deepening your own Consciousness.

PRATYABHIJÑĀHṚDAYAM

The Secret of Self-Recognition

JAIDEVA SINGH

The little work is a digest of the Pratyabhijñā system of Kashmir Śaiva philosophy, prepared by Kṣemarāja, the illustrious disciple of Abhinavagupta. It avoids all polemics and gives in a very succinct form (20 sūtras) the main tenets of the Pratyabhijñā presented by Utpala. Pratyabhijñā means recognition. Jīva is Śiva; by identifying himself with his body, Jīva has forgotten his real nature. This teaching is meant to enable Jīva to recognise his own real self i.e., Śiva and to suggest to him the spiritual discipline needed to attain 'atonement' with ŚIVA. Dr. Jaideva Singh has considerably revised and enlarged his translation, and provided a scholarly Introduction, Notes, Glossary of technical terms and Indexes. It serves as the best introduction to Pratyabhijñā philosophy.

MOTILAL BANARSIDASS PUBLISHERS PVT. LTD.

Delhi (INDIA)

E-mail: mlbd@vsnl.com
Website: www.mlbd.com

Rs. 450 **Code: 32558**

ISBN 978-81-208-3255-8

